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ABSTRACT

The 20 essays in this collection discuss accomplishments, shortcomings, and future concerns of the Southeast Alternatives Project (SEA), a federally funded project located in Minneapolis whichwas designed to explore alternatives in education. Teachers, administrators, students, parents, and school board members who were involved in the project between 1971 and 1976 are the authors of the articles. They deal with specific topics such as the role of community participation in SEA, the role of the teacher in alternative schools, administrative decentralization, the professional and personal effects of SEA on the teachers active in it, and the impact of SEA on the Minneapolis Public Schools. (Author/MK)

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FOREWORD

Southeast Alternatives, serving 2500 students, is a five year federally funded project designed to explore alternatives in education. Students may choose to attend Marcy Open School, Pratt Continuous Progress School, Tuttle Contemporary School (all having kindergarten through 6th grade levels), the Free School (K-12), or Marshall University High School (6-12) which offers alternatives within the school. Southeast Alternatives not only offers choices in educational modes, but also strives to increase community participation in the educational process and seeks to decentralize the administrative structure. A strong Community Education program brings together the whole community with programs available morning, afternoon and evening seven days a week. Ongoing evaluation measures the progress of the project. A Teacher Center serves as the hub of staff development and teacher training and operates with Minneapolis Public Schools, University of Minnesota and federal resources.

Teachers, administrators, students, parents and school board members have contributed the twenty articles contained in the SEA Journal. These individuals have frankly discussed accomplishments, shortcomings and concerns for the future, thus giving substantive insights into the five year federally funded project.

The publication further reflects the efforts of Southeast Alternatives to involve many people in the educational process.

Special recognition and thanks also must be given here to Dr. James K. Kent, former director of Southeast Alternatives.

His courageous leadership and dedication to providing a humane environment for those involved in education have caused many changes in public education in Minneapolis during the past eight years.

Sally French, Editor
October, 1975

FEB 23 1976

SEA JOURNAL 1971-1976

A collection of twenty essays by people who have been involved in the Southeast Alternatives project during the past five years.

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Education for the Future - Choice not Chance

By Dr. James K. Kent

"We must break our patterned ways of thought and reassert that students must be treated as individuals in a humane learning environment."

To dare to speak to the awesome topic of alternative education these days with any degree of clarity is a humbling experience because there are no easy answers. H. L. Mencken once said: *"There is a solution to every problem: simple, quick, and wrong."* It must be asserted that there are no panaceas in public education and certainly not in the alternative schools movement. Rather, alternative schools should be viewed as one sensible way to demonstrate what so many know so well – that children learn in myriad ways, that effective teaching strategies vary, and that parents, students, faculties and staffs have a right to be involved in school decisions for, after all, we are public institutions under elected citizen boards of education.

It would be appropriate to begin with an overview of the national alternative schools movement and its Minneapolis city-wide environment before presenting some of its particular application in Southeast Alternatives. As a practicing administrator in the field, I hope that my observations of various facets of our efforts might be relevant to your interests and concerns.

Before developing this overview, one should acknowledge the proposition that change, evolutionary and revolutionary, is the dominant fact and factor of our time. Margaret Mead speaks of the prefigurative cultural revolution; Charles Reich speaks of Consciousness III; and it seems wise to say that no significant or lasting issue can be intelligently considered without reference to change. I believe our society – old and young alike – are undergoing a profound cultural revolution and the so-called problems of the schools are the problems of society at large.

Like it or not, if we are to deal meaningfully with educational reform – we must break our patterned ways of thought and reassert once more that students must be treated as individuals in a humane learning environment. If you accept the proposition that we do live in a revolutionary changing society, let us also acknowledge Alvin Toffler's observation in **Future Shock**: *"successful coping with rapid change will require most of us to adopt a new stance toward the future, a new sensitive awareness of the role it plays in the present . . . (and) the disturbing fact is that the vast majority of people, including the educated and otherwise sophisticated people, find the idea of change so threatening that they attempt to deny its existence."*

To mention alternative schooling in 1971 as a

public schools reform strategy was akin to Jonathan Livingston Seagull standing in the Center for Shame surrounded by the disapproving roar of his fellow gulls and being banished to a solitary life on the Far Cliffs. While we might chuckle today, many of us here know the sometimes lonely existence of life in the unknown and often unknowable world. Alternative schooling in a public school system is the opening of Pandora's box to the hurricane winds of change. Sometimes there are fair winds but often there are stormy seas as we search for more effective instructional programs testing and breaking the Council Flock's comfortable and accepted ways. This is by way of acknowledging that the climate for discussing and developing alternative schooling has become more acceptable in recent years but both for good and bad reasons.

There are a variety of motivations that have drawn people to support the alternative schools movement. This writer should disassociate himself from those who are using the movement to destroy the public school system and those who would use us to create or maintain racially segregated schools, exclusively white or predominantly minority group. I would also disassociate myself from those who use the movement to cop out of

> The movement nationally has some scalawags . . . but a growing body of research can't be swept under our administrators' rugs any longer."

teaching the mastery of basic skills. Let's be candid. The alternative schools movement nationally has some scalawags and carpetbaggers but, in my judgment, it contains an overwhelming percentage of educators and citizens who simply don't regard the status quo in Minneapolis or elsewhere as the most effective educational system if one really wants to treat different individual children differently. This is not to disparage our schools. It is to recognize a growing body of research, evaluations, and informed opinions that simply can't be swept under our administrators' rugs any longer.

While it is true that alternative school people represent many shades and stripes of educational philosophies and value systems, it has only been true in recent years within the public school sector that the alternative schools movement has begun to develop.

It is generally agreed that there have been different types of schools for decades for particular groups of children such as vocational schools, private and parochial schools, and special education institutions. Too often a family's economic status, religious beliefs, or a student's learning disability determined the school these students attended. Some of these might be deemed alternative schools; others would not. One's operational definition of an alternative school is all-important for a common point of discussion and direction. Of course, there is no consensus agreement in the educational community about a definition but I would hazard one.

While there are probably as many definitions of alternative schools as there are alternative schools, in recent years the term has generally included these characteristics:

1. **Students enroll voluntarily and the educational consumers – students and their parents – determine their choice among programs, not administrators or faculty members.**
2. **The program is a total curriculum for the whole day and provides the range of curriculum offerings including the basic skills and affective learnings.**
3. **The local school community of students, parents, faculties and administrators are the key decision making community and all these groups are substantively involved in the planning, development, operation, and evaluation of the school.**

With this definition of alternative schools in mind and acknowledging the pervasiveness of change in society, one would assert no significant and lasting changes in the educational experiences will result unless and until education's participants – parents, students, faculties and principals – are provided full access to that school's decision making processes and encouraged to make educational decisions that make the most sense to them.

Full participation in the many decision making processes is at the heart of any open, responsive, alternatives approach. Nothing less will suffice. Our present idea of what public education is and should be is absurdly narrow for the world of revolutionary change our children will inherit.

Education is for the individual and as Charles Reich states so well in **The Greening of America**: *". . . he (should) learn to search for and develop his own potential, his own individuality, his own uniqueness. That is what the word educate literally means. What we urgently need is . . . the expansion of each individual – a process continuing through life;"* in a word, education for intelligent choice making for an unknowable future.

As a city and as a public school system, how has Minneapolis responded in the past few years to the alternative school movement? What kind

of environment was conducive to this type of programming? It must be remembered that the Minneapolis Schools suffered from all the ills usually associated with large urban districts but a few short years ago: too many poor test scores of students in basic skills, old and inadequate facilities, limited funding, dissatisfied parents, a growing minority population, and inadequately trained faculty with few opportunities for professional growth, and the list could go on and on.

Suffice it to say that under the leadership of a remarkable Board of Education and Superintendent John B. Davis, this situation has been practically reversed since 1967.

During 1970-71 it became apparent that many white parents were leaving or threatening to leave the city over the desegregation/integration effort. Other large parent groups were pressuring the Board for an open school. Minneapolis had none. Student dropouts and pushouts were another concern. Out of these and other concerns grew the genesis of Southeast Alternatives.

What was called for was the necessity of designing educational opportunities based on the knowledge of how children learn. We are familiar with the thousands of piecemeal changes thrust upon the national scene in the past – the new math, team teaching, environmental education, programmed instruction, modular scheduling and all the rest. This piecemeal approach to change brought some successes and many failures as massive national reform efforts in curriculum development, compensatory education, and integrated education were tried. At the end of the 1960's a different reform approach was proposed. This different approach was espoused in the President's 1970 education message to the Congress and by the end of that year the national government had created the Experimental Schools Program in the Office of Education to test the efficacy of **comprehensive change**.

The Office of Education stated its rationale of the new Experimental Schools Program. "Dissatisfied with the results of piecemeal or individual component changes, educators have sought the opportunity to address the need for total change by placing a number of promising practices into operation. The first phase of the new Experimental Schools program of the Office of Education is designed to test and demonstrate the relative efficacy of combinations of promising practices. By supporting a limited number of large-scale experiments of comprehensive programs with a major focus on the documentation and evaluation of the projects, experimental schools will serve as a bridge from research, demonstration, and experimentation to actual school practice."

In the spring of 1971, SEA was funded to test the concept of comprehensive change including such variables as school organization and governance, curriculum development, the use of formative evaluation in decision making, community and student involvement, and teacher training broadly defined.

Minneapolis decided upon the alternatives schools theme and selected the geographic area known as Southeast for the project. SEA stands for parent choice of schools. Five schools of the 85 schools in the district are in the project. Like Jonathan Livingston Seagull we spent many days alone testing our wings as we ventured out beyond the Far Cliffs and we learned more each day. While to some comprehensive meant an approach to school improvement, to others it meant the product or results of implementing a combination of promising practices in concert. **Comprehensive in this latter sense means the provision of sufficient educational options and alternative schools so that all learners could meet with success in the program of their choice.** It is to this latter concept of comprehensive change that the SEA program is committed as parents, students, and faculties become the key decision makers.

> **"Comprehensive means the provision of sufficient educational options and alternative schools so all learners could meet with success . . ."**

Southeast Minneapolis had 29,749 citizens in its community in 1970 with 17% of those families on aid to dependent children status. Seventy-five percent of the area's children are recorded as living with both parents and a like percentage of the adults have completed a high school education. Economic diversity is also evident by the 1970 Census figures with 14% of families' incomes under $4,000; 43% of families were between $4,000 and $10,000; and 42% were over $10,000. The racial composition of the five alternative schools in 1974-75 was 81% majority group members and 19% minority group members. Over 500 of Southeast's 2,200 public school students have transferred into the Southeast Schools from outside the geographic attendance area to get the alternative program of their choice. Southeast's adult population also contains many students attending the main campus of the University of Minnesota. Southeast is bounded by the Mississippi River on its western border, by St. Paul on its east and composed of a bewildering amalgamation of railroad yards, factories, flour mills, commercial

shopping areas, residential neighborhoods, and housing projects. Southeast has a citizenry and public school population which is as diverse as almost any American urban area can project in creating a tolerance for diverse education options.

Prior to 1970-71 the Southeast public schools were somewhat typical of those in the remainder of the city although several innovative practices were in evidence. Four separate K-6 neighborhood elementary schools existed, with each having its own textbook basal curriculum. There was a single secondary school, grades 7-12, to which all students were expected to attend. The grades 7-9 junior high school curriculum was required while the senior high was on the standard semester or year-long course plan.

What were the project-wide goals established for Southeast Alternatives? Clearly the four main goals related directly to those major parts of the definition given to alternative education. The four project-wide goals were and are as follows:

Sea Goals

1. "Providing a curriculum which helps children master basic skills . . . ."
2. "The project will test four alternative school styles (K-6) and selected options in schooling programs for grades 7-12, articulated upon the elementary alternatives."
3. "The project will test decentralized governance with some transfer of decision-making power from both the Minneapolis Board of Education and the central administration of the Minneapolis Public Schools."
4. "The project will test comprehensive change over a five year period from 6/1/71-6/30/76, combining promising school practices in a mutually reinforcing design. Curriculum, staff training, administration, teaching methods, internal research, and governance in SEA make up the main mutually reinforcing parts."

A thirty member school community planning team, composed of faculty, parents, principals and high school students, developed the proposal which was in keeping with the emphasis on localized decision making. This proposal was enthusiastically supported by the central administration, the School Board, and ultimately won in competition with 489 school districts nation-wide. Through extensive involvement of faculties and parents, four alternative programs were delineated each with its different educational philosophy, its assumptions about learning and knowledge, and its expression of parental values and perceived children's needs. These streams of educational philosophy and practice range along a continuum at the elementary level from the Tuttle Contemporary School to Pratt Continuous Progress to the Marcy Open School to the Southeast Free School. The Free School, being a K-12 program, also serves secondary youth. At Marshall-University a student self-registration trimester electives program was established at the senior high level, while for grades 6-8 the faculty has been reorganized into teaching teams in the middle school program and serves as extensions of the open, continuous progress and graded contemporary elementary alternatives. Parents of "sixth" graders can elect to have their students remain at the elementary program or enter the Middle School program during the school year.

"A thirty member school community planning team developed the proposal in competition with 489 school districts nationwide."

The fact that each alternative program has a rich history and practice to draw upon has been well stated in a 1972 **Harvard Educational Review** article by Lawrence Kohlberg and Rochelle Mayer. They identified three "streams" of education as being romanticism (free school), progressiveness (open education), and cultural transmission (contemporary).

"Each alternative program has a rich history to draw upon . . ."

Continuous progress is also built upon the cultural transmission philosophy but moves children through a basic curriculum on an individualized basis according to a child's learning rate.

A free school based on "romantic" principles defines knowledge and reality in terms of the immediate inner experiences of the self. There is no set body of knowledge through which all children must pass or that all children must learn. Skills and achievements are not satisfying in themselves but only as a means of individual awareness, happiness and mental health. Survival skills are stressed, but the free school community of parents, teachers, and students, especially, establish the curriculum. Romanticism is antithetical to the cultural transmission philosophy which has dominated Western and American society over the years. Simply put this view holds that education consists of trans-

mitting a set body of knowledge, skills, and values of the culture to all students. The teaching faculty largely determines what is to be taught where, when and how.

In the Tuttle Contemporary program children

> "The intent is not to compare programs to find the best one. Rather it is to evaluate the objectives each program has established . . ."

are largely grouped by single age grade levels while at Pratt an ungraded team teaching approach is used.

Progressivism is the other basic philosophy cited by Kohlberg and Mayer. In this open school alternative approach, knowledge is equated, not with inner experience like the romantics nor with societal definitions of reality, but with the resolution experienced by an individual interacting with one's environment. Piaget's theory of intellectual development has been richly drawn upon by open education proponents in recent decades.

Within each alternative mode of education, mastery of basic skills in the cognitive and affective areas have been emphasized in different ways. To date after four years, both the city-wide norm referenced tests and an independent outside evaluation team's objective based mathematics and reading testing program have both indicated that students in all four alternative elementary programs are learning well. The intent is not to compare programs to find the best one. Rather, the purpose is to evaluate the objectives each program has established for those families that select that particular program. This evidence has refuted those who would claim that children don't learn to read well in open, continuous progress, and free schools. In short, we feel that the project-wide goals of mastery of basic skills and of providing distinct alternative modes of education are being met well.

In reference to the third goal of governance and decision making, the project has pioneered many approaches in Minneapolis. Again, to harken back to the definition of an alternative program, there must be substantive involvement of parents, faculties, principals and students in determining their own program. Several examples could be cited as illustrative:

1. Parents have their choice of programs and can change schools if they wish.
2. Each school has its own advisory council that range from the Southeast Free School's

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Governing Board to the Tuttle PTA.
3. A Southeast Council with elected student, parents, faculty and community agency representatives gave major direction to me as area director.

> "Southeast Alternatives could not sustain the instructional program without this fantastic community participation in their schools . . ."

4. A Management Team of administrators, K-12 staff and two parents have managed by a consensus process the program budget of over 3 million annually.
5. Student determination of many curricular offerings flourish at all five schools ranging from Pratt's interest electives to Marcy's Community Day to Marshall-University's self-registration system.
6. A community volunteer program regularly brings in over 200 parents, citizens, and other volunteers into the five schools each week, and the community education program that had but 75 adults four years ago coming one night to classes now embraces over 4,000 students and adults weekly. Yes, one can truthfully say that the schools and community are interdependent in alternative education.

Southeast Alternatives, where parent satisfaction runs from 75 to 98 percent at the five schools, simply could not sustain the instructional program without this fantastic community participation in their schools.

A final illustration of decentralized decision making and governance would be the Teacher Center. The Center started in Southeast Alternatives in 1972 as a way of having an elected group of faculty, staff, and parents determine curriculum and staff development priorities and to fund programs. The following year, the University of Minnesota concluded a formal contractual agreement with the Minneapolis School Board, and today the Teacher Center stands acknowledged nationally as an innovative approach. The institutional support of the Center is an integral part of the development of effective educational alternatives for students as well as a premier setting for the implementation of various alternative ways of delivering preservice and inservice training programs. As an institutional partnership in education the Teacher Center is a model worthy of state and national emulation.

The question is often asked, whither alternative education? Speaking of Minneapolis, the direction is unmistakenly clear. Alternative education for all students is a School Board formal commitment. Due to the initial success of Southeast Alternatives in 1973, the School Board unanimously approved – liberal, moderate and conservative – the creation of a city-wide alternative educational system at the elementary level by September, 1976. During the 1974-75 school year, there have been almost 8,000 students, or 30 percent of the elementary age population, who are in parent choice of alternative programs. At the secondary level, the School Board voted in October, 1974 – again unanimously – in favor of alternative programs city-wide.

> "Alternative education for all (MPS) students is a school board formal commitment."

The city's interest in elementary alternatives has resulted in a re-examination of secondary programs and the attempt is being made – in Marshall-University's Middle School program and elsewhere – to provide a continuity of learning environments and an articulated K-12 curriculum for families to choose among.

Substantial changes have been made in what once might have been called traditional junior high programs. Minneapolis has reorganized most of these schools to provide faculty teaching teams, seventh and eighth grade centers, and a vast expansion of electives and options. At the senior high level when students increasingly make their own decisions and articulate their educational program, all ten high schools moved to a common trimester student self-registration model in 1974, pioneered at Marshall-University. The expectation is that students will use the city as their learning laboratory and take courses off campus, in vocational centers, at other high schools and in learning stations in community, civic, business, and cultural agencies. Over 10,000 students spend part or all of their day off campus in a wide variety of learning sites, including some who attend alternative secondary programs allied with the various high schools.

What have we learned in Minneapolis about alternative schools within a public school district? Although it is hard to make definitive statements at any given point of time, several observations

are certainly pertinent. Above all, the public schools have been and are quite responsive to the varying needs of children and to parental expectations.

Alternative schools in Minneapolis have been able to encourage the bountiful energy, common sense and dedication of parents, faculty, administrators, and students in reforming their own schools to fit their needs. The goal of mastery of basic skills remains an essential priority for all schools.

Though the instructional approaches and emphases vary, these survival skills (as the Southeast Free School deems them) are acknowledged as essential to today's learner. Parent satisfaction increases as does community participation in school affairs in alternative schools since people have been welcomed and have taken an active role in their school's program.

Above all, alternative schools have made all of us rethink our patterned ways by focusing on the implications of the reality that children learn in many different ways and that the individual student's education is the "raison d'etre" in a democratic society. As we continue to focus anew on child development, learning theories and observe children as they really are – unique individuals – we come to realize that alternative schooling is here to stay and to flourish!

This overview of Minneapolis and its Experimental Schools project or comprehensive change centering on the theme of alternative schools and multiple educational options has served to provoke many thoughtful questions for those instrumental in reforming public education in the nation. At this point we might remind ourselves of Jonathan's remarks to Poor Fletch: "Don't believe what your eyes are telling you. All they show is limitation. Look with your understanding, find out what you already know, and you'll see the way to fly." Jonathan vanished and Fletcher Gull faced a new group of students and said: *"To begin with . . . you've got to understand that a seagull is an unlimited idea of freedom and your whole body, from wing tip to wing tip, is nothing more than your thought itself."*

With these comments perhaps we can sense widening horizons for what alternative schooling in public education can be if indeed the concepts have merit in your eyes and those you serve.

Alternative education can be frustrating, exhilarating, confounding, and complex, but it is never dull for one moment.

And, when the going gets rough with my good friends in the so-called establishment, I just recall with envy the message sent by the Warden and Fellows of Wadham College, Oxford, to a group who had just presented non-negotiable demands. *"Dear Gentlemen, we note your threat to take what you call 'direct action' unless your demands are immediately met. We feel that it is only sporting to let you know that our governing body includes three experts in chemical warfare, two ex-commandos skilled with dynamite and torturing prisoners, four qualified marksmen in both small arms and rifles, two ex-artillery men, one holder of the Victoria Cross, four Karate experts, and a chaplain. The governing body has authorized me to tell you that we look forward with confidence to what you call a 'confrontation;' and I may even say with anticipation."*

As a result of this successful innovation, several findings have been reported:

1. **Students in all five schools are mastering the basic skills in reading and mathematics as measured by norm referenced and objectives based tests.**
2. **Parental satisfaction with their public schools has increased from 35 percent in 1971 to over 85 percent in 1974.**
3. **The school community has become substantively involved in school activities including curriculum, budget, evaluation, and personnel matters.**
4. **Distinct alternative modes of education (contemporary, continuous progress, open, and free) have been established successfully.**
5. **The racial composition of all five schools has been enhanced in each of the past four years by voluntary family choice of programs.**
6. **The School Board has unanimously supported the program and its city-wide adoption by unanimous vote. Financial commitments have been made with local Board funds.**

According to the project-wide goals established, Southeast Alternatives has been a success, but the past is prologue and our thoughts are next turned toward the future.

Dr. James K. Kent came to Minneapolis in 1968 as Superintendent John B. Davis' administrative assistant. He became Director of Marshall-University High School in 1969 and subsequently managed the writing effort for the Southeast Alternatives proposal to NIE. He served as Director of Southeast Alternatives from its inception until June 1975. He is now Superintendent of Schools, Marlborough, Massachusetts.

The Spirit of 1976 or The Role of the Principal in Administrative Decentralization

By Betty Jo Zander

"It's an exciting, overwhelming process, but no one involved in SEA would have it any other way – and that's the Spirit of 1976."

1976 will mark the end of the five year Experimental Schools Project in Southeast Minneapolis and since it is hard to imagine that anyone who has ever read one article that purports to talk about "The Role of the Principal" would ever want to read another one, the writer will endeavor to connect "spirit" and "76" with a forward look as to what 1976 and beyond will bring. We are everlastingly being told by experts what the role of a school principal is to be. Educational administrators especially, are fond of making lengthy and learned lists which detail exhaustively the kinds of duties, functions, and responsibilities which fall to the principal. "The principal as educational leader" is a common phrase which receives considerable bandying about, and after fairly limited exposure, stops meaning anything to the reader. It is the intention of this article to comment on what a principal does when administrative decentralization in a school district takes place. Therefore, it will not describe what the principal does as business manager of the school, or as teacher evaluator, or even educational leader, but rather will try to look at some of the aspects of the principal's job that must accompany any real commitment to educational change.

Before undertaking that weighty assignment, it will be helpful to understand some terms that will be used. It is my hope that constant referral to the definitions will not be necessary, lest one have the feeling of reading the cast of characters in **War and Peace**, but it seems important for an understanding of the topic that some names used by the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Southeast Alternatives project be understood.

Cluster:

Cluster is herein defined as a group of elementary schools which feed into a Junior High School and a Senior High School in a particular geographic area of the city. It is the K–12 grouping through which children move during their school years 5 – 18.

Management Team:

The Management Team is the organization of professional educators in the cluster concerned with matters that are pertinent to all the schools. It includes the principal of each school, the cluster director, support staff, and is attended by community representatives.

Southeast Council

The Southeast Council is the over-all governing body of the cluster. It is made up of representatives from the various programs (usually teachers) and members of the community from each school. It is charged with the policy-recommending functions of the cluster. The director of the cluster serves as the executive for this group, and it operates within the bounds established by the Minneapolis Board of Education for advisory councils.

SEA:

Southeast Alternatives (SEA) is the designated name of the cluster. SEA has been the beneficiary of a five year, six and one-half million dollar grant from the National Institute of Education, testing the idea of whether comprehensive change can be accomplished through the grouping of many promising practices in one small geographical area.

Educational Services Center:

The Educational Services Center still commonly known as 807, is the office of the central administration. It houses the superintendent and the staff who serve a central function even though the district has decentralized into the East, West, and North areas.

Starting with the school year 1975–76, SEA will become a cluster within the West Area. Prior to this time, during the first four years of federal funding, it has operated as a relatively autonomous cluster, reporting directly through the SEA Director to the superintendent and staff of the Educational Services Center. One of SEA's main purposes has been to find out whether this kind of decentralized model contributes to comprehensive change in shcools. After SEA began in 1971, the school district, which already had an East and North pyramid, extended the decentralization idea city-wide, and for two years this administrative model has operated in Minneapolis. Each of the areas, West, North and East, is served by an area superintendent who reports through the deputy superintendent to the superintendent of schools. The idea that schools be organized as K–12 clusters within decentralized units of administration is not new. In Minneapolis, SEA's efforts in this direction are ahead of any other cluster in the city. By "ahead" is meant that SEA has been at the process longer and has had the benefit of the federal assistance aimed at measuring what the effects of such decentralization are.

I have had four years of experience in SEA, two of which have been as principal of the continuous progress school. As one begins describing what leadership demands, expectations, and responsibilities fall on the principal who is operating in this kind of decentralized model, one major point stands out. That point is that there are no guidelines or job descriptions, or textbook recipes which say how the principal is to operate. There are no landmarks which allow one to know that the product is completed and can now be replicated in school districts all over the country. Rather, there is the sure knowledge that what takes place is a process, which changes and evolves on a daily basis.

The best that can be managed as a description of what a principal does, is what could be described at a particular point in time as taking place at that moment. If the principal is doing a good job, the process of evolution and change will continue. The accumulation of experiences which take place in that process can be written down and talked about and used as a jumping off place for new ideas and ways of working, but they cannot be presented as definitive answers to questions about how to be a principal. The process is one which raises questions but doesn't offer many answers. It presents a departure from the way the principalship has traditionally operated, and perhaps stands a chance of breathing new life into an old venture.

> **"The main objective . . . with decentralization is to increase the amount of participation."**

The main objective that most authorities seem to associate with decentralization is to increase the amount of participation in decision making by the people most affected by those decisions.

The main vehicle which usually develops for accomplishing this kind of participatory decision making is the advisory council.

The assumption is made that advisory councils made up of parents, community members and school staff, will be able to make better decisions for schools because they know more about them and care more about them in ways that a centralized governing body cannot achieve.

There is also the underlying assumption that such local advisory groups can plan better for the long range future of cluster schools and are not as likely to have to make short term and crisis/reaction decisions that seem to typify the kind of planning with which city-wide boards must contend, even though they try very hard to accomplish long-range planning.

"The principal is the key person to see that – communication channels are open."

Decentralization brings with it greater control over matters which affect curriculum, personnel, and budget for individual schools, and as the person traditionally responsible for these areas, the principal's role in their management is radically altered. Several courses appear to be open. The principal can continue to make many of the decisions by herself, or himself, or the principal can work very hard to establish the kind of contact which gives serious entry into that decision making process for members of the student body, staff, and community. The experience in SEA has gone a great distance toward making this latter kind of participation a reality. All of the SEA schools maintain advisory groups which range along a continuum of participation (as might be expected). For example:

Tuttle School, the Contemporary school, has a PTA with advisory powers;

Pratt, the Continuous Progress school has both the traditional PTA and an advisory council. Some merger of the two groups may be on the horizon, with decisions to be made jointly by staff and parents.

Marcy, the Open school has a parent advisory council which maintains an active role in all affairs of the school;

Free School, has probably gone the farthest as the governing board would like to be delegated real decision making powers from the centralized board of education. Members are very active in the arena of decision making with the power to carry out those decisions, rather than simply being advisory to the principal.

Marshall University High School, A principal's Advisory council is advisory only and has no power.

There seem to be some key attitudes and behaviors that a principal must develop to function effectively in a school where many people are really participating in the decision making process.

- **First**, it seems obvious that the principal must be sincere in the effort to develop avenues for participatory decision making and not try to pass off decisions made by the principal as having been made by all affected by them.
- **Second**, whatever group there is that makes up the advisory council, or whatever device is used to get a lot of people involved, needs to represent the entire community and not just people traditionally found to be interested in the affairs of the schools.
- **Third**, people need to be educated to partipate in this process, and need to be brought in when plans are in the developmental stage, not after things have come to the point where it is merely assent to what has already been decided.

Further, since obviously not everybody can participate in all decisions at all times, a representative group and the principal must take the responsibility of informing the larger family and community groups of progress regarding a participatory undertaking.

SEA has developed a reasonably effective method for communicating the latter kind of information at least in the elementary schools.

On Wednesday, every student takes home a Brown Envelope which contains items which are necessary for parents and family to see. The envelope is brought back to school on Thursday with whatever response is requested from the student's family, whether it be lunch money or tear-off sheets indicating parents' reaction to a particular proposal. Obviously, such an institutionalized method of communication can be of great assistance in keeping people informed about what is happening and allows quick response when ideas need to be tried or the community needs to be solicited for people willing to serve on particular committees or projects.

The principal is the key person to see that these kinds of things happen and that communication channels are open so that broad representation of opinion is maintained and that people are brought in when plans are in the developmental stage. The principal also has to be sure that facilitating procedures are carried out, which include such matters as scheduling meetings at convenient times, seeing that adequate records are kept, and providing the necessary secretarial assistance.

As such advisory councils gain experience, it would seem logical that they would be extremely valuable to the centralized board of education in the area of priorities and goals that the school district as a whole should pursue. This is in keeping with the democratic idea of governance moving from the bottom to the top rather than from the top down. Making the process work places a great burden on the principal as the person most logically assigned to work with advisory groups.

If I were to point out one particular task that should fall on the school principal in the decentralized cluster it would be to have that person responsible for developing what could be called the "spirit" of the school. The spirit of the school should not be confused with that great, good relic of the past, known as "school spirit", which is associated with winning athletic teams and feeling that one's school is the greatest in the world.

Rather, developing a spirit of the school means engaging all of the participants in that school – students, staff, parents, and community in discussions about what the school ought to be doing, and having had those discussions, figuring out how the school should do what it decides is important. This develops a spirit of the school which is unique for each school. It establishes the climate that will prevail at the school – hopefully, as a warm inviting place where visitors feel welcome and sense that it is a place where everybody counts. The spirit of a school comes from free give and take discussions where widely diverse opinions are listened to with respect and the decision-making process carefully includes all segments of the school community.

Perhaps, the spirit of the school can be extended to encompass the spirit of the cluster and a few brief comments, in closing, on the principal's relationship to the two groups most responsbile for that cluster spirit.

As a member of the Management Team, the principal shares responsibility for administrative decisions which affect all students in the cluster. In SEA, there is sincere concern on the part of administrators for what is developing in all the

"The spirit of the school comes from free give and take discussions where widely diverse opinions are listened to with respect . . ."

SEA schools and programs, and a strong feeling of cooperation, not rivalry. Alternative schools are scuccessful in SEA in large part due to the prevailing spirit which says no one program is better than another, only different. **The continuous progress school is successful because students and families have other choices if the continuous progress program does not meet their needs.**

The principal is also represented, through the Management Team, on the Southeast Council, the advisory group which models for individual schools what participatory decision making is all about.

At the time of this writing, SEA is moving forward in the process of merging the Management Team and the Southeast Council. Is that the final answer? Absolutely not. It is just another example of the change and evolution that becomes the norm in a decentralized cluster – for all the participants, including the principal. It's an exciting, at times overwhelming process, but no one involed in SEA would have it any other way, and that's the spirit of 1976.

Betty Jo Zander has been principal of Pratt Continuous Progress School for two years. She served on the original planning group for SEA, and as the first chairperson of the citywide Alternatives Advisory Task Force. Ms. Zander holds a Doctor of Education degree and was a participant on the North Central Association Task Force which drew up standards for the accreditation of alternative schools.

Teaching at the Free School - A Personal Statement

By Donald Brundage

". . . always the ultimate goal was teaching, sharing what I learned with others."

This is an article about the role of the teacher in an alternative school; more specifically, it is on the role of one teacher, myself, in one alternative school, the Southeast Free School. Because I have been with the School since its beginning in 1971, and because it is my first teaching job, my identity as a person has been entwined with the School as an institution in a very intimate way, so any statement I make about it must by necessity be a highly personal one. Since I do bring so much of myself to the School, I feel I should describe some of my own background and preparation before looking at the concept of the School itself and its historical development. Sometimes, I must admit, the "myself/itself" identification with the School can go too far. More than once I have found myself jumping to an emotional defense when a visitor makes a thoughtful criticism, expressing concerns that I myself share. Not unlike, I suppose, an older brother coming to the aid of his younger sibling in a conflict, regardless of "who started it". Maybe a successful free school requires a certain degree of emotional attachment from those involved in order to make it work. It certainly has had its fair share from me.

I

I grew up in a working-class family in South Minneapolis, and becoming a teacher wasn't something that occurred to me in my sophomore year of college as a third option among potential future plans. I recall my fourth grade teacher at Bancroft elementary school, Mrs. Kissinger (a name not without its irony) smiling with a degree of condescending amusement when I told her the reason that I had learned all the names, dates, and political parties of all the presidents was that I wanted to become an American history teacher. My excellent civics teacher at Folwell Jr. High School, Mrs. Wermerskirchen, took me a lot more seriously when I chose "High School Social Studies Teacher" as the topic for the "occupational outline" that all ninth-graders in Mpls. public schools did at the time. Between then and 1971 I was, however, diverted a few times from that goal. When I graduated from Roosevelt high school in 1963 (living in the same house that my mother lived in when she graduated from there in 1926), my main interests were in music and in German, but always with the ultimate goal of teaching, of sharing what I had learned with others (and I have managed to teach both of these subjects at the School).

"Things have changed", they say, since I started the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1963. At that time John Kennedy was in Washington/Camelot, only forty-six Americans had died in Indochina (a place few Americans, I would venture, could have even located on a map), and all seemed right in heaven and on earth. Just two years later the President had been assassinated, and the man who replaced him had gotten the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed by the Senate. A former Black Muslim named Malcolm had also been silenced, the media was paying more and more attention to a former Harvard professor named Leary, and the same "Gulf of Tonkin Congress" passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which for the first time pumped large amounts of federal money into local school districts, eventually affecting the existence of SEA and the Free School.

Since that time there has occurred in the nation and the world such intellectual ferment, social and political explosion, and cultural florescence that it seems hard to imagine anything comparable happening in recent history during such a short period of time. Maybe because I've lived through this period, partaken in its passions, and drunk of its experiences that I am so impressed by its intensity, but nonetheless it now looks as if American society, its people, their values, and basic institutions have changed in fundamental, irreversible ways, and far from the least of these changes has occurred in the institution of public education. A decade ago there were no public alternative schools (the "progressive movement" in education had been one of the indirect casualties of the McCarthy Era), and now they are increasing, both public and private, in communities throughout the country.

When I graduated from the University in 1967, it wasn't with a teacher's certificate. I somehow felt that my public education had let me down and had not prepared me adequately for what was happening in the world and the nation. I felt very confused, and wasn't personally ready to join in the "fiasco", and help pull on younger, more vulnerable people the fraud that I felt had been perpetrated on me. After working for the City for a year, and travelling in Europe and the U.S. for another year, I felt my world view had been pulled together. I had become deeply radicalized, and I wanted to return to school, get a certificate (in anthropology, history, and German), and help students get the education in national, world, and human issues and concerns that I somehow never got from my teachers, but without the regimentation, pressures, competition, and/or indifference that I had had to put up with. By this time (1970) many educators (Holt, Kozol, Kohl, Dennison, Goodman) were eloquently describing in books the thoughts and feelings that many of us were having, and the fact that so many sensitive and intelligent people were thinking along the same lines served as added encouragement. Where to do this type of teaching seemed to be a problem. By need and personal experience the inner-city seemed to be the most logical, so I did my student teaching at Mpls. Central. Then a social worker friend told me that a "free school" was going to be started in Southeast Mpls. It seemed too good to be true.

"I felt my public education let me down. It had not prepared me for what was happening in the world."

II

Initially, the overall proposal for SEA called for a Free school with a "head teacher", assisted by two other teachers for seventy K–12 students. Thirty people had applied, and through screenings and interviews this was narrowed down to eighteen, then nine, and finally six, the original funds being divided equally among us, with one person, Tom O'Connel, being designated head teacher. Except for Tom O'Connel, who had been a founder of the Community School in St. Paul, and a few parents and students, all of us were neophytes in the "free school business". What bonded everyone, parents, staff, and students, was a very strong sense of community identity – "we're all in this together, and we're gonna make it work" – plus commonly shared ideas about what we **didn't** want, based on past experiences. For instance, we didn't want

> " . . . to build an institution from the ground up, a lot more than magic is required . . ."

credits, or grades, or rigid age groupings, or required attendance , or a regular school building, etc. What we wanted, I suppose, was for everyone to get together with all their good intentions and ideas and have a little "magic" happen. (One of the interview questions that a parent asked me was "do you believe in magic?") Maybe what we overlooked was that in order to build an institution from the ground up, a lot more than magic is required, as we found out in our first year. We found a building (a few rooms of one, at least), but the building had to be maintained, and every stick of furniture, every pencil, had to be requisitioned, borrowed or begged. Records had to be kept, both on materials and people. Activities had to be planned and executed, while constantly redesigning the physical plant, and reevaluating what we had just done. And all the while, the spirit of community had to be maintained. All-school meetings every morning, community pot-luck suppers almost every week, evening or after school staff meetings every school day, and sometimes on weekends. "How can we keep Colin from losing his glasses? Does Cassandra want to learn to read yet? What are we going to do with that group of older kids that just hang out and don't do anything?" When people asked me during the first year "what's the Free School like?", I would often reflect it back on them by saying "take about a hundred people, a chunk of money, a building, and the task of making a completely new school, and imagine what you'd come up with, including the problems".

Out of all of this, a school took form. Most of the secondary students were there because there was something or many things about their old school, or about our society, or about the state

> ". . . given complete freedom, we began to impose our own structure."

of the world, that was unsettling to them; in other words, "alienated youth". Being somewhat of an alienated youth myself, an instant, spontaneous rapport developed between me and most of the older students. What started out to be "rap groups" ended up as ongoing classes. There were no area or subject assignments for the staff, we were free to do whatever we felt we could do best, and after a while it became apparent that the most successful endeavors were coming from those who were defining a specific role with either an age group or a subject area.

In other words, given complete freedom, we began to impose our own structure. A slogan painted on the wall, "Freedom is doing what you want, as long as it doesn't interfere with anyone else", was (perhaps symbolically) painted over in the summer between the first and second year. Overseeing this transformation was our twenty-four year old head teacher, Tom O'Connel, who often seemed to me like he was the only one who truly had a long range vision, who really had a feeling for "what was going on". Tom wrote a lengthy proposal for the coming years that called for doubling the student enrollment, the staff size (including teacher aides) and the building space, organizing the school into age and subject resource areas, each staffed by specific people, merging the School with the Glendale Community Street Academy, making specific provisions for record-keeping and "accountability", putting decision-making in the hands of a community governing board, and then he resigned. Disenchanted with our own youthfulness and lack of experience, and realizing the need for us to gradually "merge into" the Minneapolis School system ("Hey, gang, we're not just a one-shot deal"), we were looking for a new director with concrete administrative skills and experience. We settled on Tony Morley, whose goal was "to show that a free school could be a viable alternative within a public school system using the normal number of dollars per student".

Translating this goal into a working reality would mean the School would become less like a "free school", and more like a regular, public school. For instance, where small group or tutorial sessions were often the in-school learning mode, more and more large "classes" would happen. Where spontaneous rap-groups centering around topics that students often brought up were common, now there was a regular schedule of classes that changed at a regular period of time, that students signed up for, etc. Spontaneity had to be "scheduled in", in terms of free time on the teacher's schedule, during which I could talk informally with students about any problems, give a flute lesson or a German tutorial, play around in the gym with a few students. In order to work effectively in the School, the teacher (or **this** teacher, anyway) had to become kind of a hybrid between a close friend with whom a student/friend shares information and experiences, and a classroom teacher who deliberately and consistently offers a rather formal body of content, such as world history. And therein lies, I feel, the trick, or the "art", or whatever you want to call it, of being a free school teacher. I would tend to de-emphasize the importance of "teaching method" per

"What is important is 'style'."

se - use whatever method works for you personally at the time. What is important is "style" - how you are perceived or presented as a whole human being. How to open up your humanness and show love, outrage, irony, genuine concern, passion for what you are doing, disdain for the disdainful, while at the same time being a "teacher", an adult who has something to offer in terms of insights, information, perceptions on values, and isn't afraid to offer it in a serious and consistent way. Jonathon Kozol says he believes in a school "in which effective adults do not try to seem less than, in reality, they are, (and) in which the teacher does not strive to simulate the status or condition either of an accidental resource-person, tangential consciousness, wandering mystic, or movable reading-lab, but comes right out, in full view of the children, with all of the richness, humor, desperation, rage, self-contradiction, strength and pathos which he would reveal, as well, to other grown-ups."* I guess I agree with that fine human being.

* Jonathon Kozol, **Free Schools**. (Boston: Hought-Mifflin Co.) 1972, P58

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III

During these last three years the size of the student enrollment and the structural organization of the School (primary, middle, secondary, with resource centers) has remained about the same, and so has my defined role as "secondary social studies teacher". What I have spent these years doing, then, is refining the definition of this role, expanding the areas of my expertise, and generally trying to get better at what I do. What I "do", in some form or another, has been current events, history, economics, sociology, ethnic and minority studies, geography and area studies, youth and law, drug ed., American and world politics, sex ed, anthropology, and German (at least in years one and two) while learning Chinese from a volunteer along with the students (on years one, two and three), playing saxaphone in various school music groups, and being a student advisor, and an in-school "politician" (more on these two functions later). While the variety of things that I do or have to do may be a little extreme, I really don't think that it's all that unusual for a free school teacher. Of the original staff, I am the only one left, and that's why the fabled "burn-out rate" in this type of institution is so high; you have to handle so many areas (all social studies, in my case) for all students of a given age group (ages fourteen to eighteen for me), and be revising and adding to the curriculum, because you've had many students several years in a row. A student teacher recently remarked that "teaching at a free school is a little like being the only doctor in a small town". Maybe so. One person can only do a good job within a limited

"Teaching at a free school is a little like being the only doctor in a small town."

area, however, and some things get clasped to the bosom, while others, unfortunately, get kind of neglected.

The role of advisor is one of the most important functions that any free School teacher can have, and paradoxically it is one of the least "organized" in terms of regular time allotment and written definition. Each teacher has from ten to twenty student advisees of the age group that the teacher ordinarily works with, and what you do with the advisee can be divided into two categories: paperwork, and "relating". The paper-work that I do with an advisee is: help with the scheduling, parent conferences, work with the student on graduation, and make out quarterly reports.

The "relating" aspect of it varies from student to student. With new students I usually want to give my "rap" on what I feel the school is about, find out where they're at, what's important to them, why they chose this school, introduce them to other students, and generally make friends with them, pretty much on an adult-to-adult level. With ongoing students it is building the relationship, talking about world-view, laughing and complaining together, helping with problems, and sometimes being "heavy". This is another area where the "art" of it all comes in; sometimes a good working relationship and friendship develops naturally, sometimes never. It's implicit for the survival of free schools (practically all have a similar advisee system) that the former happens a lot more than the latter. It takes time, though, and caring; it really does.

When I say part of my role is that of politician,

> ". . . if you're starting new schools, you'd better have some basis of philosophical departure."

this is what I mean: Free schools are by nature political institutions because they are part of that larger movement for social change that I alluded to earlier. Also, if you're going to go around starting completely new schools, either within or without older, existing school systems, you'd better have some basis of philosophical departure from the schools that are already there, otherwise your reason for existing can be somewhat shaky. Defining these points of departure, this "new philosophy", is often a clumsy, organic political process, especially if it is to be done democratically, with as much community input as possible. Since almost everyone has their own ideas on "what the Free School should be like", and since certain people's ideas are bound to be along similar lines due to past experiences, shared perceptions and interests, factions tend to form on whatever boards or committees the Free School has established for community input, and you have some pretty hot-and-heavy in-school politics. Politics are as much a part of free schools as are bluejeans, and having been with the School since its beginning, plus being inclined toward that sort of thing by nature, I have found myself "in the thick of it", so to speak. In this capacity as politician I have served on our governing board, personnel committee, accreditation committee, and others. This has been a real learning experience, one of my most significant. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss any of the issues – some are still too fresh for me to handle objectively – I'll save all that for my non-fiction novel. In any political struggle, however, some individuals or groups are going to come out better than others. What is important for the growth and survival of the School is that you don't gloat too much if your side comes out better, or don't be a "poor sport" if your side doesn't fare so well. This has been one of the most damaging things to "the movement" in general, and free schools are no exception. An attempt should always be made to maintain that ever-important spirit of community.

IV

In summing up, I must ask the question, "what more can I say?" In writing about an activity that has been as absorbing as this one has been to me for the last four years, it is as difficult knowing what to leave out as it is saying what I finally decide to include. There are a thousand scenes and anecdotes, goodtimes and badtimes, stories about kids (the first time I have used that word in this article) that I'm sure every teacher must have, but somehow I feel they must be much more intense at the Free School because of the size of the school and the familiarity and closeness of everyone involved. It may sound like a cliche, but you really do get to know other people, and in so doing learn to know yourself a lot better. As a result of my association with the School I have been to Mexico, Toronto, Chicago on field trips with students, been in homes as a guest and met people and whole families that I never would have (or never dreamt I would have, for that matter) otherwise, laughed hard, cried harder, fallen in love, and generally been picked up and moved in ways that I never would have thought a "job" could do back in 1971 when I innocently walked into a room at Tuttle school with my application for the position of "teacher" at the Southeast Free School.

Donald Brundage is a teacher at the Southeast Free School.

How to Spot Open Teacherism in the Field

By Mary Lou Hartley

"Look for a teacher who accepts the idea that learning is facilitated by experience and is not limited . . ."

In this article we'll be looking at a listing of teacher behaviors that might help in spotting people who would feel comfortable and hopefully successful, in an open classroom or open school. At the outset it is important that we be very clear that this is not an analysis or taxonomy of the umpteen characteristics a teacher must have in order to be a successful open school teacher. Such teachers will have some of the behaviors listed. **It should also be very clear that many teachers have some of these same behaviors but choose to continue in their usual school setting without putting a label on what they are doing and without joining a faculty of people who want to evangelize openly for what they believe.**

This listing has been arrived at through a nine year foray into open education preceded by three intensive summers working for a foundation-supported group developing and trial teaching experience-based science. The momentum of involvement has snowballed through the years reaching maximum proporations in my present position at Marcy Open School.

Marcy itself can be briefly described as being somewhat like the British Primary Integrated Day schools and having within each classroom a three year span (K-2, 3-5, 3-6). The school has changed, sometimes drastically, from year to year through the four years of the experiment and is still evolving as it goes into the fifth year of the experiment. In the school, though, the day is roughly divided into home base time and choice time.

In an open school children have control over what they will do and when and where. The school has strong community involvement, so many adults of all ages and types are working and teaching in the school. They are often available when children need to follow special interests out into the community on other than a whole class basis. All adults in the school are called by their first names. There is in the staff a strengthening belief that children learn reading, writing and math through functional activities connected to their own needs and interests. Careful record keeping and lots of one to one and small group contacts encourage attention to individual prog-

ress skill-wise, interest-wise, and learning style-wise.

Much importance is placed on activities that build individual and group awareness and valuing of others. Whole class meetings are one means of building group awareness and are organizational necessities as well, but children do few other things as a whole class. Another kind of valuing comes as a bonus of the multi-age classrooms and an effort to bring younger and older children together often enough for real knowing and appreciation.

The staff and community are developing skills in becoming conscious of children's developmental levels. Expectations of children, suitable experiences and materials for children are becoming more and more closely tied to each child's developmental needs. The staff and school community are increasingly applying what they have studied and observed about child development.

When Lillian Weber, author of **The English Infant School and Informal Education** visited Marcy one of the things she said was, "The school obviously belongs to the children and they know it." Indeed the classrooms, the school as a whole and the playground (a school-designed extension of the open school) belong to the children.

How to Spot Open Teacherism In The Field

– Look for a teacher who seems alert to the feedback coming from her students. Both positive and negative feedback come in in any classroom. Look for the teacher who shows concern and makes adjustments when feed-back includes: boredom; hostility; restlessness. non-cooperation; low commitment. Look for the teacher who is concerned and tries to get the rest of the school concerned when feedback from the school as a whole includes: many remarks from staff about incorrigible kids; more effort on controlling the kids than on listening to them; much "ho-hum" attitude toward teaching; much of griping and criticizing, little of praising and support.

– Look for the teacher or team of teachers who, when their adjustment to feedback doesn't seem to be working (maybe because of a plan involving too much scheduling) will try something new (maybe a plan with elbow room for kids and teacher to reduce tensions and follow interests).

–Look for the teacher who gives children who have strong interests a chance to pursue them at length but who helps foster interests in children

whose projects are short-lived or who haven't yet discovered what their interests are.

– Look for a teacher who heeds the feedback and seeks help in adjusting her classroom scene by: sharing ideas with other teachers trying to make a change; getting into helpful courses or workshops; reading articles and books on how to effect change; taking big steps or baby steps in risk taking in order to "help it happen".

– Look for a veteran teacher who requests student teachers and young volunteers, who shares the years' experience with young people but who learns from them by finding out what they're doing, reading, talking about in their coursework and their lives and how they interact with the children.

– Look for the teacher who finds ways to listen to parents not only at PTA and conference times but by going to homes and/or inviting parents to take part in the school day in some way.

– Look for the teacher who sees that the schoolroom does not have to be so different physically from homes and communities and who will: incorporate into the classroom the reality that children should move about as other people do at home and in their jobs; be realistic about how children as well as adults have an ebb and flow to their productivity that should be accepted in school as elsewhere.

– Look for a teacher who has a classroom that has the children's mark upon it, whose classroom shows joint ownership, KID'S-ADULTS INC.

– Look for the teacher who has opinions about many things and makes some of them known and who may laugh, cry, yell, dance, be silly or angry or hug somebody just like any regular person.

– Look for the teacher who is becoming comfortable with sharing the teaching, but who paces the flow of helpers and who limits teachers and helpers to providing for particular needs which might include: helpers who provide depth in an area; helpers who enable children to get out into the community on other than a whole class basis; helpers who increase options; helpers who enlarge the range of teachers (age, lifestyle, educational background, expectation style, ethnic emphases, economic niche, sex).

– Look for the teacher who increasingly accepts the idea that learning is facilitated by experiences and is not limited to workbooks, textbooks, authorities, films, papers and pencils. Look for the teacher whose students see more and more clearly that legitimate learning experiences can include: dramatic play; messy trial and error constructing with blocks, hammers, sand and water; confrontations with real and simulated problem situations; games of many kinds; dealings with the totality of people and events within the schoolroom, the school as a whole and the community.

– Look for the teacher who communicates "You're o.k." to her students by lots of one-to-one contacts over the weeks and months, contacts involving sensitive questioning and listening by the teacher, involving comfortable, confident responding by the student.

– Look for the teacher who gradually accepts the fact that recordkeeping is vital in a classroom where children work at their own pace, where they often gain their 3R skills through involvement in projects of interest to them. Look for the teacher who understands that the open school and the open school teacher are as accountable for the 3R's as a traditional school and its teachers but that "the proof of the pudding" is complex to record.

– Look for the teacher who recognizes the fact that options coming from outside the school and from special adults are not for the purpose of pure entertainment or for over spoon-feeding kids their 3R's. Look for the teacher who is sensitive to the fact that, though an open school goal may be to have children initiate new projects and make first moves toward securing materials and teachers, open school reality is that kids will arrive at this particular goal at different times because they show a whole range of readiness. The children range all the way from no experience with initiating things to thinking that many options and teachers are for entertainment, to knowing "if I need something special it's up to me to make some moves to get it." Because of this wide range of readiness, the key adult needs a firm handle on where children are in this spectrum of readiness. Some children may need help to discover and take advantage of outside help, some may need a cut-off because of perceiving these opportunities as entertainment, others may need tempering of individual needs in the interest of their role as a group member.

– Look for the teacher who is sometimes seen being taught something by another adult or child, who models enthusiasm over learning something new.

– Look for a teacher who will request the help of outside observers to tally activity and behavior in

the classroom in order to settle a problem.

– Look for a teacher who begins to see that when children very often work alone or in small groups they may need experiences attuned to helping them listen to and care about the larger group.

– Look for teachers who have walked a tightrope in some other phase of their career or life, been risktakers. In many many schools there is still a wide range of how one manages a school day: if you're up for the day you can do the role-playing or bring in the equal rights for women speaker; if you're in neutral or down you can assign the workbook pages or textbook assignment. In the Open School your school goals may have been published, the community has had a big hand in evolving them, you are dedicated to them yourself, and you find yourself in the fishbowl. So you are constantly asking, "Will these things that we're doing get us to our goal?". Everyone involved seems to know what should be happening in your open classroom, but you are the cog that gets it all in motion. So you are balancing on a tightrope and probably vulnerable as well to criticism. Lots and lots and lots of teachers know exactly what they're "Sposed to do". It helps if this pioneer has pioneered before – has been a risktaker in politics, social action, switching careers or school jobs, changing life style, etc., etc.

– Look for the teacher who can accept the role of schoolroom manager in a new sense. It might seem that the "one man show" type schoolroom would be the super-manager scene but it turns out that having a multi-age bunch of students doing things at their own pace, often with other adults, does involve high level managing. No small part of managing has to do with the gear need for the wide age range which is accesible to children at all times of the day.

– Look for the teacher who can be concerned but cool when a visitor says, "Johnny was building his circus all day. He didn't read a book or do a math problem. How can you allow that to go on?" Look for the teacher who does not get overly defensive, who tries to explain the values she sees for Johnny in building a circus, but who can say good-by to the visitor knowing that everyone who observes the open classroom in action is simply not at a point of readiness to value circus building as a whole day activity. The visitor's day in the classroom is part of his "getting ready" or maybe part of his "getting turned off by" open teacherism.

– Look for the teacher who tries one tack, then another, in the quest for quality. An open classroom or open school with all its options can be seen

by children as a continuous-smorgasbord (a "sample it all-don't eat heartily" place). If the teacher senses the sampling, look for evidence of increased valuing of special effort, of completion, of fine craftsmanship and of attention to the growth from month to month of the child. There should be less of token efforts in an open classroom because a child doesn't have to chop up his time and do something he has no commitment to – but, how is she/he using this luxury? Many younger children growing up through an open school have less problem with how to use this luxury because they don't know it's a luxury. For them the freedom with responsibility often comes naturally. But the older children who may have come from another school setting may be disoriented, unsure about the open school. Look for the teacher who keeps her antenna attuned to the children who need help in making a good % of their involvement of a quality type for them.

– Look for the teacher who is accepting of the fact that if there is a true community involvement, volunteers of all types (especially parents) will see the bitter with the better. If this is a gutsey involvement it means volunteers seeing the teacher at a low ebb – it means sharing a bomb-out field trip – it means seeing the classroom at its peacfu!

productive level and its hostile non-productive level. When community involvement is going for real it means questioning from volunteers and teachers like, "How can we work together at up times and at down times?" This won't work at all if volunteers are judgmental and teachers defensive. It won't happen either with spotty, short term volunteer commitments.

How To Spot Advanced Open Teacherism In The Field

Again, it is unlikely that no advanced open school teacher will have all these characteristics. Some of these behaviors like the earlier ones will be spotted in other than open school teachers.

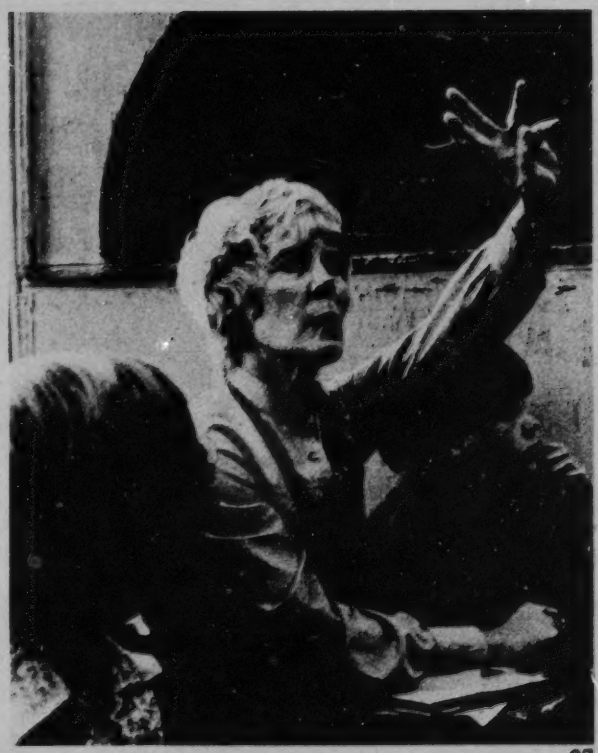
– Look for a teacher who is communicating to other staff members "You're o.k.". Co-workers have up periods of productivity and down periods, strong and less strong points to their teaching style. "Advanced" teachers will notice strengths, inquire about them, ask for help in gaining such strengths for themselves, and get into other classrooms to see the good things happen. Such support builds an "I'm o.k." spirit in the vulnerable open school experiment.

– Look for teachers who are evolving an individual style of using volunteers best suited to their way of operating. There should be clarity for all concerned about: care that a volunteer know what is the expectation; that the teacher know, though not supervise, what the volunteer does; that the teacher limit the amount of people and options so kids plus adults don't have a fragmented day; that a teacher always ask, "Is this activity, this volunteer, this student teacher, this trip building the children's independence or creating more de-

pendence; is adding this person's activity at this time going to foster a three ring circus atmosphere or a fairly serene atmosphere?

– Finally, look for teachers in this open school or team who demonstrate that because of the natural rhythm of staff turnover, new people can best be tuned in to the school philosophy by great concern and action from every staff and support person. This concern should not be solely oriented toward "You know nothing – we know everything." Experimental schools like every other school, should be alert to what strengths new staff bring to the school.

Mary Lou Hartley began teaching in Minneapolis in 1950 with special interests in outdoor education and science. In addition to classroom teaching in Minneapolis, she has also developed science curriculum (EES) in Boston, trained Peace Corps volunteers, taught college lab courses in the English Integrated Day and is currently a teacher on the staff of Marcy Open School.



Teachers Comment on SEA

By David O'Fallon

"The money bought time – to think, to write, freedom to try things I might not have done . . ."

Slowly, the dust settles, the expensive experts pack their bags and board planes bound for the next innovation. The hall carpet wears thin and fades; the shiny curricular packets become dog eared. The community volunteers and resource teachers fall back into old routines or disappear. The classroom teacher looks up to see thirty-three kids, no aides, the woodshop closed due to lack of funds, and no clay for the potters wheel.

This is a picture of a fear often mentioned in an informal and conversational survey conducted by Teacher Center staff. The questions were asked in personal interviews in an effort to begin fleshing out the raw data of the SEA experience. Clearly, teachers carry the brunt of the project. How have they handled the stresses of change? How do they manage their changing roles? How have abundant money and resources affected them? In short, what effect has the SEA experiment had on the men and women who each day accept the responsibility for the growth and learning of our children?

There is no doubt that SEA has had a strong impact on the personal and professional lives of its teachers, if the survey is any indication. But the nature and extent of this impact, as described in their own words, is only beginning to be gathered. As a beginning and out of a concern for the teacher's perspective, six questions were asked of some 24 teachers. They were asked: whether their role had changed and what they had gained as resources in a personal way compared to their own development two or more years ago.

Individuals spoke of role changes in as many ways as there were respondents. Many feel their roles are now even more difficult and demanding than before SEA. "There has been a steady acceleration of tasks and responsibilities – where will it all end?" asks a staff person from the Continuous Progress School, "Much more difficult but also more positive," said a Marshall-University High School staff member, who added, "I'm more aware of the individual needs of pupils, more a facilitator than a teacher, a guide and not a dictator."

Others amplified the feeling that the struggle of changing old roles and programs has brought with the anxiety a sense of personal growth and strength. " I'm still a classroom teacher," said another staff person at Marshall-University High, "but I'm more flexible because of the many changes (I've been through)." At the same school another teacher said, "I'm much more a facilitator of learning, much less a disciplinarian. I'm

more of a counselor now, more a group leader." A teacher at the Open School spoke for many when she said, "My personal growth has been tremendous and I feel considerably better equipped both as a teacher and as a person." A Free School aide wrote, "Yes, I've gained knowledge continuously, besides being able to create learning experience, my knowledge, growth, new skills and work with people have really blossomed. I can see lots of new avenues open. On the other hand, the project has been personally detrimental – taken ten years off my life and created dire hardship financially. I was considering other career options that I have sacrificed." And a Contemporary School teacher answers the question concerning her personal growth with, "Definite growth, for the first time I have the resources at hand to do what I was trained to do. This has been a great source of personal satisfaction." And is joined by a Continuous Progress teacher, " Almost infinitely (more resourceful). Taking into account low points, a kind of growth has begun that will never stop." And many simply answered Yes!

"On the other hand – ," reflects the duality of stress and growth. All is not flowers and the sweet smell of success. There was sacrifice too, great amounts of time were given, time and energy beyond any measure of money. Time taken from family and private life and given to the pursuit of an idea. Teachers were asked what they had given up. The answers were often very brief and pointed. "Private time," and another "Private time," and again "A lot of time!" And more: "Only thing I've given up is personal time," and "sleeping well at night," were joined by some who said they had given up "peace of mind." An Open School teacher said she, "(has) given up the organized classroom where the teacher always knew what was happening. In an individual program you can't know because of individual choices and interest and projects. It's harder to keep track of everything because so many things are going on at once. I gave up personal life to get this started. There's more strain."

It is difficult to speak of personal sacrifices, and many of those who mentioned losses of time and sleep almost immediately added that the

sacrifice was worth the return.

"The teachers felt – " is a misleading phrase. They are as individual as the children they serve. Whatever common patterns seem to emerge must be placed within the picture of an individual teacher, faced with great opportunity to develop new skills and concepts and confronted by tremendous pressure to do so. As shown by one who said, "All that staff training we went through about 'how to be efficient' was the content of the first workshops. We could have been a group of junior corporation executives. The content of our real teaching experience wasn't dealt with. It was 'let's whip this group, our staff, into shape,' just like a football team." Or by another who said, "I've given up time – so demanding – and there has been pressure to give up time, knowing the money won't last forever, that the opportunities will be fewer. In every other respect I've gained."

So there was certainly a great deal of pressure placed on the SEA teacher, partly by the need and desire to work some basic changes in their own teaching and in the schools with the accompanying uncertainty, and partly by the sense that this plenitude of money and richness of resources would end.

And the money was critical. It bought materials, supplies, films, and space, but most of all, it bought time. Time to think. Time to write. Time to learn. Time to reflect, renew and often change old values, old methods, old skills. When asked what impact the money had had on her teaching role, one answered, "It has given me freedom to try things that I might not have done if I had to do it all on my own. Encourages me to take a risk – I'm willing to use more of my time and money." An Open School teacher answered, "The money has made materials available. (It has) stimulated personal growth in many areas including affective as well as cognitive." And a Contemporary School staff person said, "It has allowed my time in the building to be twice what local support would provide." And another teacher at the same school added, "It has provided me the opportunity to get to see and know every child in the school every day rather than the once a week gym assignment that I previously functioned with. It builds a strong relationship and good understanding of what a child's needs might be as well as that of the duce new courses."

There is strength in these teachers. They acknowledge the tension and anxiety induced by a change process, and also assert that their own growth, their own commitment to children learning was worth the effort.

A Free School teacher said that the SEA experiment overall had "allowed the creation of a school that was wide open for people to be as creative as they want to be. Allowed people to take risks, good and creative risks without always having to worry about whether or not it was a 'safe' risk. My definition of a successful learning experience has been broadened."

And now? The money is almost gone. Staff reductions are taking place. "I fear," said one, "that even more new responsibilities will be added on top of other work for me with no additional pay." And another, "I fear loss of resource centers and of people. More child-adult relationships are important, equipment should be less important. It's a waste of money to teach new methods of reading; I'd rather get more people into school." And more than a few fear for their own jobs.

Perhaps the only fair generalization to make now is that a cloud of future uncertainty blurs the strong sense of excitement and accomplishment that otherwise characterizes much of the SEA experience.

David O'Fallon came from Philadelphia in 1972 to begin a theatre program for the Southeast Free School. Finding the need to include theatre in the other SEA schools, the SEA Theatre Project was developed to become a K-12 program ranging from creative drama, and dance, to play production. Elements of this program are now funded locally.

Dr. O'Fallon received his doctorate in theatre in 1974 from Union Graduate School and now serves as a city-wide consultant in theatre through the MPS/UM Teacher Center.

The Teacher Center

By Frederick V. Hayen and Margaret Shryer

"Centers must be consumer controlled, clearly and unequivocally."

The Teacher Center is now a city-wide service agency for Minneapolis Public School staff and community groups, with a primary responsibility to assist schools developing alternative programs. Although alternative program support is the Center's primary mission, staff of the Center are available as trainers and resource staff in other areas of training for school personnel. In addition, the Center serves as a program development agency for the College of Education and attempts to bridge the College's development efforts with personnel and programs in the schools.

The Teacher Center is perhaps unique in its relationships to the parent institutions, University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Public Schools, and in the role it plays on their behalf.

It is first of all a delivery system for training programs in teacher education. Common priorities of in-service, pre-service and curriculum development are combined when possible.

In a second role, the Center provides a resource facility to which faculty, staff, administrators, community, students and others are attracted. Through informal and intentional contacts new ideas germinate and new solutions to problems are found.

In addition the Center is an experiment in organizational governance and differentiated Public Schools. Other program resources are under the policy direction of a joint Teacher staffing. The resources of the Center are in much greater control by the clientele of the Center than would be found in most organizations. Autonomy is given the elected in-service committee for distributing in-service resources to teachers, aides, administrators and community in the Southeast Alternatives Program of the Minneapolis Center Board whose members are appointed by the Dean of the University, College of Education, and the Superintendent of Schools, Minneapolis.

The Center is staffed with public school teachers and administrators, University faculty and community. All serve a comprehensive function in the Center's activity without a rigid leveling of staff roles based on educational background.

How the Teacher Center Began

Staff Development services in the Southeast Alternatives Program were initially limited to in-service training program for staff. Needs, plans, and ideas were presented by individuals or staff representatives from the component schools to the staff development director. These were shaped into program designs, funded, and implemented. Budgets were loosely drawn on each proposal. Budget management, however, was centralized as a responsibility of the Director of Staff Development.

During the first year (1970-71) of Southeast Alternatives, it became apparent that some system for student program and staff training needs assessment and in-service program design had to be developed that would involve faculty, parents, administrators, students, and others in the processes, and in the final decisions on the resources to be applied. During that first year, a Director of Staff Development functioned with considerable autonomy within that process.

Overtures were made to NIE to approve the formulation of a SEA Teacher Center to serve the Southeast Alternative program's in-service needs. It was felt that a Teacher Center would be better able to:

1. **Support K-12 planning and training activities.**
2. **Bring the skills of component teachers and others as trainers into programs designed for their own school and other component groups.**
3. **Provide a mechanism to share training programs generated with a given component, with the staff from another component.**
4. **Provide an organization through which University and local Minneapolis linkages could be tested and formalized with all SEA schools.**
5. **Provide better access for community members including parents and students as well as others to be involved in a trainer or trainee role.**

In early October, 1972, the second year of the project a board of thirteen members was elected and appointed as follows: 7 faculty/staff and 1 administrator from the SEA schools, 3 community appointments from the Southeast Educational Council, and SEA secondary students. The organization was considered a major improvement over the first year when the administrator made all of the decisions.

In early fall, 1972, just as the new SEA Teacher Center was getting underway, the Director of SEA, one of the Associate Deans of the University College of Education, and others began to discuss the possibilities of changing the focus of the relationships between schools and the University. A Teacher Center model was discussed and various concepts and designs were suggested.

It was clear that there were compelling reasons for both institutions to look at a new relationship that would extend K-12. Both institutions had to reach out to the other and take some risks.

An agreement was forged from these discussions and was presented to the Board of Regents and the Board of Education. Both approved and on July 1, 1973 the MPS/UM Teacher Center was established.

An eight member Board was appointed by the Dean of the College of Education and the Superintendent of Schools and included University administrators, faculty appointments, public school teachers with both institutions appointing at least one community representative. The Teacher Center Board, in turn, selected a Director from a field of fourteen candidates from the University and the schools.

The circumstances which brought about the establishment of the MPS/UM Teacher Center were undoubtedly unique to the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Public Schools.

It is, however, reasonable to assume that similar conditions are at work in other places. Perhaps the most significant factors are those that relate to the NIE fund which allows a reasonable time to test the model and a chance to take some financial risks; and the willingness of individuals to transcend historical perspectives and risk new relationships.

IN-SERVICE COMMITTEE – A Decision-Making Body

The Inservice Committee, with its membership and scope of responsibility, is always a surprise to those outside SEA particularly when it is learned that this group, made up

largely of teachers and parents, is the decision making body for all inservice in SEA. This essentially autonomous group is based on the concept that the personal and programmatic needs of an educational staff and community can best be met when the members are involved in the decision making processing.

The In Service Committee is composed of twelve voting members elected by the schools or constituency they represent: three elementary schools, the junior/senior high school, the Free School, the Southeast Council, the Management Team and the University of Minnesota. A teacher on special assignment to the Teacher Center acts as coordinator.

The Committee has major responsibility for reviewing, evaluating and funding staff development plans that are submitted in the form of proposals. A policy statement and set of guidelines reflect the Committee's perception of staff development in relation to the goals and objectives of the SEA plan. Proposals are often represented by a delegation, usually the proposal writer and those whom the proposal serves. This participation is encouraged for two reasons. First, the Committee members get first-hand, in-depth answers to their questions and secondly, the proposal writer can see how thoroughly and thoughtfully proposals are reviewed. A simple majority funds a proposal with the coordinator voting only in case of tie. Once funding is approved, an important task is the monitoring and evaluation process. Another Inservice Committee Task is assisting in the annual needs assessment. Examples of the funded projects are listed here.

Funded Projects

- Training sessions for parent volunteers and tutors in reading programs conducted by a University professor and the community coordinator who is a parent at the Contemporary School.
- Release time for a teacher to attend a workshop on Family Relationships conducted by the Minnesota Council.
- Planning session for 9-12 Open School staff to prepare curriculum and gather resources for classroom use.
- Release time for a teacher to participate in a Language Arts Convention and to present a workshop on "wordless" books.
- A training session for each of the elementary schools on how to prepare, plan and execute cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities.
- Curriculum Development for an open school teacher to help facilitate his placement as kindergarten teacher.
- Funding for Parent Participation Project at Contemporary School in which parents work with small groups of students for one week. Parents and students plan activities and evaluate project upon completion.
- Release time for two teachers to observe team teaching at another school.
- Funds for twelve high school students of the year book advisory staff to attend ATC Forum.
- Funds for a workshop for volunteers to learn photographic skills, darkroom techniques and how to work with small groups in this activity.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT – A Collective Term

Staff development receives the broadest interpretation and application possible in our system of inservice.

"Staff," first of all, includes all of the people who work with children in or out of the school building. In Southeast this means aides, community members on an off-campus site, parents who volunteer in the classroom, resource specialists, coordinators, students, paraprofessionals, student teachers, interns, as well as teachers and administrators.

In a program dedicated to bringing about change, this "all-inclusiveness" is essential.

Through participation comes "ownership," not by any well-defined group, but by individuals as part of a broad cross-section of staff.

Certain activities automatically require representation from every segment of the staff.

One such activity is the pre-fall workshop. This is a two-day workshop for all staff to join in a discussion of goals, setting priorities and planning.

The SE Free School, for example, held their workshop in a retreat setting at a "Y" camp. The goal for the two days stated: "The major need of the Free School is to begin the year with a renewed sense of its philosophy and purpose, including the range of basic agreement and difference among staff." Individuals contributed to

the agenda and through small group discussions conducted by in-house leaders, the staff shared assumptions and values regarding curriculum, public schooling, community needs, teaching, programs, responsibilities. Without input from all staff at this initial stage, implementation of planning goes haltingly at best.

"Staff includes all of the people who work with children."

Commitment and mutual support are built in when programs are cooperatively planned.

As we use the term staff development, it is important to understand that it designates any area of skills, knowledge or expertise that staff members identify as a need. Specific examples will be cited later, but consideration is given to a wide range of ideas and plans – whatever staff indicates they need in order to fulfill their roles in a system of alternative schools. Thus the need to put together research and ideas into a curricular unit falls within our definition. Out of involvement of a staff member in a learning situation, a curricular idea takes shape and personal development and curriculum design develop alongside each other. It becomes an interdependent process, particularly when teachers and students enter into a training project to build curriculum out of the learning situation. One such project – Creative Movement/Drama – was funded by the MPS/UM Teacher Center Board. The master teachers were: a specialist in Theatre Arts on the Teacher Center Staff and a University instructor in Dance. Classroom teachers, dance students from the University of Minnesota and about 50 children ranging in ages 9 through 12, worked together for an hour twice a week over a period of six weeks followed by workshops for classroom teachers and dance students.

The objectives of the project were to: (1) develop a training process through which teachers improve their sense of and skills in movement and drama, (2) provide students in the U of M PE Department's dance program a chance to apply their movement skills to an interdisciplinary approach in the elementary school, and (3) examine the impact that an interdisciplinary program in the arts can have on the K-6 program and the way it relates to the child and his ways of learning and the teacher and his/her perception of new skills and roles.

The teachers felt confident that the project had helped them acquire the skills necessary to continue the activities. Out of this emerged a curriculum in which teachers were given opportunity to develop an integrated program using an interdisciplinary approach.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT – A Process of Involvement

The staff development needs of the Southeast Alternatives Program are determined through a needs assessment process that was first initiated by the Teacher Center in 1973. At that time a procedure and time line were drafted and an initial budget allocation was made for each school. Approximately 18% of the total budget was reserved for the In-service Committee (described above) to use during the year as a "response fund" for programs in which assessments fell short or in which unanticipated needs developed.

The needs assessment gets underway with assignment of Teacher Center staff members to each of the schools to assist them in developing their plans that focus on the program for the following school year. The Teacher Center staff member meets with the principal and school staff to review the overall goals of the Southeast Alternatives program and then work with individuals and small groups as they attempt to articulate and identify their own needs within the larger programatic needs.

Through personal interviews and a questionnaire, answers are sought to the question: "What do you need in order to contribute effectively to the resolution of the organizational needs?" The responses are sorted and mutual needs coordinated so that the diverse staff needs and the comprehensive organizational needs are both represented in a narrative statement of the plan.

There is at this point a strong temptation to impose a course of action – in the form of a source, seminar or a "packaged" training program. It is essential, however, that staff be very much involved in the design of the training. Involvement is solicited, in part, by the statement: "If desired, give ideas as to how the needs listed may be met. Describe the Activity/Training/Experience." These ideas and plans become the basis for a training model which best resolves the need. The training design is extended to include a cost figure. All of this information is returned to the school staff for review and prioritizing. The In-Service Committee in the final review may, where necessary, alter training plans to accommodate budget and staff time limitations.

An important part of all programs is the procedure for evaluation and dissemination which varies according to the kind of project. A minimum requirement is a written report or summary, but other evaluative techniques include debriefing, live or via video-tape, sharing through informal discussions, agenda and minutes of meetings, outlines of planning, tape-recorded interview, coordinator visits to projects. Members of the committee who are teachers in the schools, where many of the funded projects take place, are a direct pipeline to what is effective. This information is important in the process of assessing and monitoring all projects.

Excerpts from the final staff development plan follow.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL

Program Needs	Individual Staff Needs	Activity/Training/Experience
1) Entire staff needs to be involved in focusing on the major thrust: "Helping Kids Feel Good About Themselves at School."	1a) Within the context of the theme, staff needs to sort out individual levels of awareness and understanding. 1b) Need to develop strategies that emphasize acceptance by peers and positive self-concept.	1a) and 1b) A two-day workshop prior to opening of school that includes participation of teachers and aides. Outside consultants will provide major leadership.
2) Provide opportunity for staff to address special interest curriculum needs.	2) Individual teachers need to: – discuss successes and failures and share ideas for the child who has been mainstreamed. – rewrite and evaluate CAM objectives. – evaluate reading charts. – review systematically new math. – become more informed in the area of affective behavior.	2) Six two-hour sessions involving faculty and staff. Meetings will be scheduled throughout the year.

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

Program Needs	Individual Staff Needs	Activity/Training/Experience
1) Development of curriculum, including its revision and extension, as it relates to the entire scope of the continuous progress program.	1a) Individual staff members develop "pack-kits" for use by persons, particularly aides and volunteers, who teach interest groups. 1b) Outline strategies, agreed upon, to build positive relationships between SEA and other areas, particularly, West Areas. 1c) Explore the use of interior space with option to use consultant. 1d) Options for teachers, aides, volunteers to receive in-service in industrial arts, pottery, photography.	The "extended-day" sessions throughout the school year involving the entire staff for a total of 12 sessions. 1e) Develop alternative curricular materials to IMS and ABC, Holt. 1f) Examine practices, e.g., the Marcy Community Day as a way of developing the integrated day.

FREE SCHOOL

Program Needs	Individual Staff Needs	Activity/Training/Experience
1) To start the year with a renewed sense of Free school staff philosophy and purpose.	1) Discuss assumptions and values re: curriculum, public schooling, teaching, community needs in structures group sessions.	1) A two-day workshop involving entire staff.
2) To start year with a common base of information and familiarity about total school resources.	2a) Sharing and showing space, materials, equipment.	2)
	2b) Explaining programs and responsibilities.	

OPEN SCHOOL

Program Needs	Individual Staff Needs	Activity/Training/Experience
1) Child Development theory and application to Open School program for staff and volunteers.	1a) Need to increase understanding of the several developmental dimensions in order to provide materials, resources, curriculum, issues, groupings appropriate to the learner's degree of maturation. The development of criteria to to judge the appropriateness of specific learning environments and activities is related to such understanding.	Through the Community Day model for release time, workshops with consultant services (to be identified) or in-house experts will be scheduled by and for participants.
Leadership and management skills: a) adults – adults b) adults – kids c) kids – kids	1b) Staff needs to learn more about the dynamics of decision-making and the processes of change, to understand more about their effectiveness as change agents, additional training in working as a team (teachers, aides, volunteers).	
	1c) Continue to develop skills in helping children structure their day, their learning, individually and in groups.	
	1d) Teaching older kids to teach younger kids.	

JR.-SR. HIGH SCHOOL

Program Needs	Individual Staff Needs	Activity/Training/Experience
1) Develop interdisciplinary curriculum for 9-12 Open School.	1) Need to plan/outline curriculum, gather resources, develop off-site learning places.	1) Two-week session for Senior High Open School staff (six).

The program need stated above is the tip of the iceberg in the planning and development of the Open School for grades 9 through 12.

The Minneapolis Public Schools' commitment to a city-wide system of alternatives has placed great responsibility on the junior and senior high school to respond to emerging educational patterns of the elementary K-6 programs. It is from the expanding Open Middle School that the Senior High Open School option has received its impetus. This two-week session during the summer includes articulation with Open Middle School and the current senior high program. A number of departments have designated part of their curriculum development for courses designed to meet the requirements of the Senior High Open School plan, e.g., Home Economics, Science and Math.

In glancing over the training models in the staff development plan, it becomes clear, very quickly, that time is the precious commodity. The schools have experimented with a variety of ways to provide compensation for staffs' time beyond their regular assignment, e.g., starting the students' school day an hour later than the teachers' day, scheduling a common preparation hour, integrating a planning time into the program, utilizing additional adults in the program, rearranging individual schedules on an "as-needed" basis. In the Community Day model for releasing teachers, students are scheduled out into the community with some of the staff and volunteers allowing others to spend time on staff development projects. There is no question that the demands upon the time of schools' staff is the critical factor in implementing staff development.

Problems/Directions

The Teacher Center has grown so rapidly through the influx of project funds (East Area Teacher Center, The Exchange and Teacher Corps) that achieving cohesive development of the organization is very difficult. Associated with this rapid growth, involving external funds, is the question of whether the Center is consciously and deliberately taking its own direction or whether it is being unduly influenced by the conditions imposed from the funding sources themselves.

There are approximately three Federal project dollars for every local (University/Public School) dollar. Is this a reasonable ratio? Are the federal programs sufficiently compatible with our localized priorities that they do not deter us from our goals?

We obviously believe that these projects support our central purposes and functions or we would not have worked to get them. However, the jury is still out on this issue and careful attention must continuously be given to re-thinking the role and activity of the Center.

The Center is also taking on more significant involvement in what might be termed "professional career development." We are attracting teachers, administrators, and University faculty to the Center for sabbatical and leave of absence programs. These individuals view the Center as a place from which they can gain new insights into their own professional careers, while simultaneously looking outward at what is going on in their own, and other, systems. The Center commits

some of its staff time and training resources to these individuals; and in return the participants assume functional roles in the programs and services of the Center. It's a productive relationship that requires the self-referred staff members to take great initiative in shaping their own future. From the graduates of the group, however, emerges a new problem for them and their system. How can these "new" professionals on returning, be placed in their own organizations so that their new found skills and self image will be utilized effectively?

Are we creating unreasonable expectations/needs within which these individuals cannot be satisfied on return to their own system? The ultimate question is: will these returning professionals impact change in their system or will the system overpower them so that they ultimately are completely defeated?

" . . . Will returning professionals impact change in their system or . . ."

Perhaps one of the most exciting and venturesome activities of the Center is the dissemination process in which we are now engaged. This process involves the establishment of Area Centers, under the management and control of teachers, administrators and community representatives. Ultimately, we hope that significant portions of the training funds available throughout the city will be delivered through these satellite Centers.

At the same time it is important that these Centers take their own form, adapt their own structure and services to fit the needs which are in the field. It is difficult to create a model and then disseminate that model – as a starting place – while trying to make clear the model can be and probably should be changed.

This process of dissemination is probably the most important activity which faces us in the immediate future.

Centers which are client controlled must become a reality for more of our MPS staff and community. When Centers have personal meaning to our staff and parents, when they become important to these people, they will be reshaped and reformed to become even more useful – provided we do not lose that essential characteristic – they must be consumer controlled, clearly and unequivocally.

Overarching all of these issues is the one relating to greater University impact. A University structure is far different from a public school system. The filtering-down or filtering-up processes are not the same at all. Individuals within the faculty of the College of Education are the key. The Center may influence curriculum programs and system interaction only insofar as it impacts individuals in the faculty. That is not to say that the administration of the college is not important. The support of the college administration is critical to the survival and roles of the Center. But other collaborations, other avenues must be used, and new ones found, to respond to University faculty members at personal as well as departmental levels. Above all the Teacher Center should be characterized as an organization which helps others initiate problem solving activity. It is not an answer place. It functions most effectively when it collaborates with its clientele; helping to define problems, identify options, and then support the clients as they attempt to resolve their own problems.

When the Center is viewed as a significant helping agency, when it can solicit and respond effectively to the individual needs, it will be used by them, and will be able to influence greater system (University/Public School) interaction and can then become the catalyst for improving education.

Frederick V. Hayen has been in public education 28 years as a teacher, counselor and administrator. Twenty of those years have been with the Minneapolis Public Schools. He joined Southeast Alternatives program as the director of staff development at the initiation of the project.

Margaret Shryer began her career in public education in Chicago in 1953 teaching German and English and joined the Minneapolis Public Schools in 1963.

During 1965-66 she wrote and developed curriculum materials with Carl Schurz Associates. She is now the Inservice Coordinator for the UM/MPS Teacher Center Inservice Committee.

Deliberate Psychological Education

By Kenneth Rustad

"Give psychology away to the students in order that they may live more effective lives."

A few years back George A. Miller, then president of the American Psychological Association, urged psychologists to "give psychology away to the people" (Miller, 1969). Miller felt that with the shortage of trained psychologists people would have to be their own psychologists and make their own self-conscious applications of principles of psychology. It was his premise that by this process of the practice of psychology that people would change their conception of themselves and what they can do. Miller saw particular institutions – hospitals, prisons, schools, industries – as promising sites for this innovation.

For several reasons the public schools seem a most appropriate setting in which to give psychology away to the students – in order that they may live more effective lives.

First there has been a growing concern over the negative effects of schooling. A host of writers and researchers have documented these results from a variety of perspectives. Space does not permit a comprehensive review of these studies, but they are perhaps best summed up by Sprinthall and Ojemann (in press) who after reviewing the effects of schooling concluded:

Thus the failures of schooling to provide for healthy personal and psychological growth are general. Negative effects cut across class lines and pervade every grade level from the beginning of schooling to an ironic commencement.

Secondly previous attempts by schools to reverse these negative effects and promote positive psychological or personal growth have not been particularly successful. Often this is so because no real deliberate attempt is ever made to have learners think and respond to inner experiences that would help them relate more effectively with themselves and others.

Most school experiences are directed toward having students think and respond to such outer areas as science, history, math, etc. Many falsely assumed that positive personal growth would emerge as a by-product of the "new" math, social studies, science, and English. In fact, it may well be that in some instances, mastery of cognitive tasks may well lead to negative values or attitudes (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964).

Even in those instances where educators have shown enough concern about the emotional and social development of children to add personal growth objectives to the goal statements, the results have at best been sporadic. Most of the only lip service was given to these personal growth objectives because educators didn't know what to do about them since very little time,

energy, and money has been devoted to systematically develop personal growth programs. Borton (1969, p. 56) aptly summarized the impact that personal growth objectives have had upon schooling:

There are two sections to almost every school's statement of educational objectives – one for real and one for show. The first, the real one, talks about academic excellence, subject mastery, and getting into a college or a job. The other discusses the human purpose of school – values, feelings, personal growth, the full and happy life. It is included because everyone knows that it is important, and that it is central to the life of every school. But it is only for show. Everyone knows how little schools have done about it.

It is obvious that there is a need for the development of curricula and new educational interventions that will promote healthy psychological growth.

"The DPE goal is to promote the personal growth of students."

The Deliberate Psychological Education Program is an attempt to fill this need. The program is designed to create a series of high school courses whose basic goal is to promote the personal growth of students

Deliberate Psychological Education Model

The curriculum approach developed in the SEA Deliberate Psychological Educational Program is based upon the Sprinthall-Mosher model (1971). The following dimensions of personal growth form the general goals of the program: (1) a more complex and integrated understanding of self, (2) the formation of personal identy, (3) greater personal autonomy, (4) greater ability to relate and communicate with others, (5) the growth of more complex ethical reasoning, and (6) the development of more complex skills and competencies.

The program has several important characteristics that distinguish it from most previous attempts by the schools to promote personal growth.

1. The program is a primary prevention curriculum intended as an elective quarter credit class open to all students. The classes are taught by regular classroom teachers and/or counselors and social workers. It is our belief that deliberate programs which are institutionalized by being in the regular curriculum are superior to coattail programs.

2. The DPE program, contrary to most psychological education programs, has a solid theoretical framework to guide its curriculum development. The program draws heavily on the theoretical concepts of cognitive-developmental psychology, especially Piaget's (Ginsburg and Opper, 1969) work on stages of cognitive development, Kohlberg's (Kohlberg, 1971) stages of moral development, and Loevinger's (Loevinger, 1970) stages of ego development. Since the concept that growth proceeds by stages is basic to the model, the program attempts to design interventions to stimulate growth either across the stage or to the next higher stage. Movement on the stages of growth along with specific skill development is the aim of any of the courses. Our experience leads us to believe that role taking ability is a key variable in promoting this personal growth; that growth comes about through experiences of taking the perspective of others.

3. The basic teaching strategy employs the seminar-practicum format commonly used by professional graduate schools. The practicum places the students in a significant adult experience involving a particular aspect of psychology. This "learning of psychology by doing psychology" is a direct attempt to broaden the experience table of adolescents by putting them in roles whose success demands taking the perspective of others. For example, students become involved in cross-age teaching, peer counseling, and nursery school work. The seminar provides the student the opportunity for an examination and reflection of the experience. Readings, films, mini-lectures, etc., are integrated into the seminars. Thus the stress is placed on learning that is real, that involves genuine responsiblity and is followed by a rigorour analysis and reflection of the experience.

". . . stress is placed on learning that is real."

4. The curriculum development includes a cycle of curriculum tryout accompanied with formative evaluation. The measurable objectives of each class are considered within two assessment areas: (1) the level of psychological maturity of the students, and (2) the acquisition of particular psychological skills. In each class the first objective is

always the same while the second objective depends upon the particular aspects of psychology under deliberate instruction. An array of assessment procedures are employed as proximate measures of psychological change such as the Kohlberg Test of Moral Maturity, the Loevinger Scale of Ego Development, interviews, clinical assessment of writing assignments and student journals. For the assessment of skill development, measures employed are specific to each class: counseling skills in the counseling class, interviewing skills in the women's class, and teaching skills in the teaching classes. Proponents of the cognitive-developmental position would maintain that effective skills learning in these areas essentially provides means and/or methods to teenagers so they experience the world differently. Thus, theoretically the technique training is a procedure for broadening the experience table of each pupil; thereby producing a higher level of psychological maturity.

Results of the Psychology of Counseling class (Rustad and Rogers, 1975) and the Psychology of Women's Class (Erickson, 1975) indicate significant movement occurred pre to post during the one quarter curriculum and that this change held up in a one-year follow-up. The Moral Dilemma class (Schaffer, 1974) was developed without an experience component, and changes in developmental growth were not obtained in the discussion - only design. Complete evaluations of the Psychology of Teaching, the Child Development, and the Two-Person Relationships classes will be completed later this year. Thus the completed evaluations and the trends in partial evaluations indicate that it is possible to achieve the stated objectives of increased psychological maturity, better understanding of self and others, and increased skill development for the pupils enrolled.

Course Descriptions

A brief description of the content and methodology of each class follows:

1. Psychology of Counseling

This curriculum consists mainly of learning to actively listen and empathically respond to the concerns of others through peer counseling experiences. The curriculum consists of three phases. Phase 1 concentrates on building relationships and promoting a positive classroom climate. The primary vehicles are self-introductions and various communication excercises. Phase 11 focuses on teaching the skills of active listening and emphatic responding. This phase incorporates relatively high structured micro teaching units stressing the counseling skills of listening for and reflecting back both the content and feeling of the message. Skills are practiced by responding to audio and video tapes, by role playing, and by helping with the real concerns of peers. The final phase (Phase 111) concentrates on the transfer of these skills to the real life of students in their interactions at home, school and work. The goal is not to create a professional cadre of teenage counselors as one class of helpers with the balance of the school population as helpees. Instead, the concepts of helping, caring and active listening remain an essentially democratic responsibility.

2. Psychology of Women's Growth

The focus of this class is on both the content and the process of female development. Field interviewing of girls and women across the life span provides a means of viewing the process of female development through different ages, stages, and tasks. Content areas chosen for interviewing include general value questions and social role questions related to vocational, educational, intellectual, and marital roles of women. This practicum experience is coupled with seminar sessions to further examine, reflect upon, and integrate the experience. Seminars are also used to reflect on current articles on sexual stereotypes, language and inequality, the equal rights amendment, and selected roles of women portrayed in literature. In this way there is a continuous, on-going, three-way connection between field interview data, works of literature, and an examination of "the self." This class is offered only to females. Both theory and research support the position that teenage girls are more likely to fully explore topics related directly to their own development if the class is not mixed.

3. Child Development

This course has as its cross-age component the direct and continuing involvement of teenagers in helping and teaching roles with three and four year old neighborhood children who are enrolled in a "play school" at the high school. Theories of child development and skills and materials for teaching young children are explored in the related seminar sessions. However, a major seminar focus is the experience of the high school students in the teaching role – in relation to their own self-perceptions, their psychological growth, and their psychological skills in the area of child care.

4. Advanced Psychology of Counseling

The Advanced Psychology of Counseling class was created to meet the requests of students who had taken Psychology of Counseling and wished to pursue this topic in greater depth. The counseling process is extended and stresses the creation of deeper understanding through advanced accurate empathy and the change of behavior through the formulation and try-out of action plans.

5. Human Behavior and Moral Dilemmas

This course is designed to promote growth along the six developmental stages of moral thinking as outlined by Kohlberg. His theory provides the framework by which progress in moral development is not only monitored but also facilitated. The major teaching strategy consists of the discussion of moral dilemmas. Dilemmas used include some available in print as well as those created by class members. Topics range from mercy killing to abortion to war and politics. Problems involving personal relationships are used as well as problems having wider social implications. The rationale for discussion of dilemmas is that growth is promoted when a student is challenged with reasoning one stage above his present stage of moral reasoning.

6. Psychology of Teaching

This course is designed to increase the level of personal development by having students assume two social roles – that of a responsible teacher and that of the learners they are teaching. High school students employ teaching skills with elementary and junior high students through the use of questionaires, simulation games, interest area topics, and moral dilemma discussions. The seminar focuses on aspects of teaching and learning. Systematic examination of the teaching process utilizing the Flander's categories within a micro teach-reteach framework is employed. Students engage in a variety of teaching activities including giving directions, non-verbal communication, questioning techniques, sending "I" and "You" messages, active listening, and process observation. Video recordings and peer process observation along with class discussions are used for feedback and debriefing after each teaching sequence.

In addition to the high school program, upper elementary students have been involved teaching lower elementary students. The content of the curriculum taught to the younger students has included tutoring in the basic subjects, teaching interest areas, discussing role taking dilemmas, and teaching affective education through puppets, filmstrips, poster pictures, role plays, creative dramatics and story reading.

7. Two-Person Relationships

The goal of this class is to promote growth along Erikson's (1968) psychosocial stages of identity formation and intimacy through qualitative changes in the process of interpersonal relating. The course examines the nature and skills of interpersonal relationships through interviews, discussions, seected readings, films, action plans and group process observation. Recognition, understanding, and practice of the qualities and characteristics of growth producing relationships as opposed to negative and destructive aspects will be stressed.

8. Fulfilling Your Potential

This course is a recent addition to the program and is offered to adults through the community education program. The curriculum consists of activities from the Psychology of Counseling and the Advanced Psychology of Counseling classes. This course differs from most adult personal growth courses which tend to focus on isolated techniques by placing the adults in the responsible role of peer counselor. In this role as a psychologist the adults can be provided the method and/or means to change their conception of what they are and what they can do.

General Comments

After nearly three years of experience the following points are worth noting.

1. Staff selection and training is extremely important. The training method employed utilized the practicum-seminar model with in-service training occurring simultaneously with the instruction of the pupils and the development of new materials. Experienced and inexperienced teachers were paired as classroom teachers. The teachers who worked out best

had high initial interest, saw the need for alternative forms of education, were interested in ideas and experimentation, and were willing to share themselves with students. There seems to be no significant difference between teachers and counselors as effective teachers of these courses. Effective teachers are just as likely to come from one group as the other. Thus deliberate psychological education can be effectively carried out by some but not all teachers or counselors.

2. Scheduling of classes must be given careful consideration. Either two two-hour blocks per week or one three-hour evening block per week seems to provide the best organization of time. Evening hours seem especially conducive for talking about personal issues with early morning or late afternoon being the least effective. Time blocks of at least two hours are necessary to effectively carry out the practicum activities of counseling, teaching and supervising.

3. Since the teaching process is basically a clinical approach the curriculum needs to be sufficiently flexible to adjust the intervention to the needs of the students. No one set of activities can be laid on all groups of students in an invariant sequence.

4. Expect the normal kinds of hassles: is "learning psychology by doing psychology" a legitimate credit?; is the content appropriate for social studies, English, home economics credit?; is this sensitivity training?, etc. These kinds of issues were raised and perhaps always will be. Perhaps the following excerpts from a student's personal journal provides the best answer.

"My behavior and attitudes have changed. I am not quite so quick to pass judgement on people, and I am a little more friendly to everybody. I still have a lot of hangups though. Another D.P. class could really help.

"I see that I do have something to offer to the people around me to make them and me a little more of a person.

"Other people have something to offer also. I can respect someone for what they are. I am not so closed to other people and their feelings.

"I learned a lot about myself and others in this class. Lots of people need lots of help and this class has taught me that I have the ability to provide some of the people with some of the help that they need. Also, if someone needs help, you must be able to find out what kind of help, and you can do that only by observing their words and actions. Then you must get them to understand that you want to help them and with some people that takes a lot of communicating."

Ed Angerhoffer
Age 17

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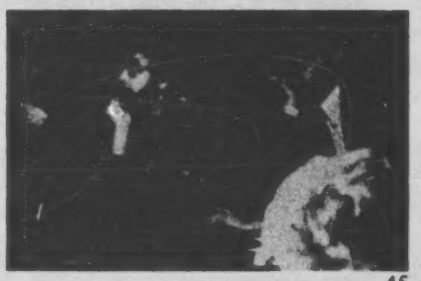


Environmental Studies and Practical Sciences

By Billie Jo Smith and Kenneth Jeddeloh

Two curriculum endeavors developed on a parallel course during the early years of the SEA are the Environmental Studies program and the Southeast Science Center.

Now merged, they represent an approach to education that broadens the outlook of both teacher and learner.

The original Southeast Alternatives proposal provided for a cadre of resource teachers, one being an environmental education specialist. The specialist was responsible for developing and implementing an environmental studies program in the five SEA schools.

The program was designed to meet the desires of the schools and community for outdoor experiences in urban and natural environments, to meet the needs of the many multi- and inter-disciplinary courses taught in the schools, and to augment the overall educational philosophy of SEA; providing children with the basic skills needed to function in society.

The goals of the Environmental Studies Program are to provide learning experiences in many disciplines which:

1. **Develop an understanding of interrelationships in natural and social systems and how man affects them.**
2. **Develop a sensitivity to human needs and the importance of cooperation and respect among people.**
3. **Develop and apply the inquiry and action skills needed to ask and answer questions and solve problems.**
4. **Develop an enthusiasm for learning and living.**

These goals should aid the students in forming attitudes and values which will positively affect their total environment.

The initial development of the program included an extensive survey of published curriculum materials which were examined and tested by the environmental studies specialist. The result was a curriculum guide for grades K-6 containing eighty activity units.

The units included real experiences in the urban community and natural areas, introduction and application of skills and interests in math, social studies, science, language arts, art, music, and physical education.

Related activites are clustered in the guide and organized into suitable grade levels although the grade level recommendations are extremely flexible because of the large number of ungraded classrooms in the SEA schools.

The guide also includes a short description of each activity, mentions the environmental concepts included in the activities and indicates the subject areas involved. These features make the guide useful to teachers as they plan to use the activities with their classes.

During the second year of the project, the K-6 curriculum was implemented. A materials center was established in conjunction with the science materials center that furnished kits of supplies to the teachers.

Numerous workshops involved teachers in the activities, helped them to plan how the materials could be used with their classes, and enabled them to schedule the units for their classrooms. The environmental studies specialist assisted teachers in the classroom and in natural and urban community experiences.

As a result of the curriculum, students began to examine their world. The ecological basis for environmental studies was met using the SCIS (Science Curriculum Improvement Study) materials in conjunction with the science program in the schools. Some of the additional experiences follow:

- Kindergarten children increased their awareness through nature hunts, visits to the river bank collecting sand and soil of different colors for soil paintings, and observations of tiny things below them and huge things above them.
- Primary children visited stream banks to collect rocks for sculptures, studied acorns, oak trees and squirrels, investigated shadows and shadow clocks, became birds collecting colored toothpick insects, watched their own tree through the seasons, searched for colors in natural and man made environments, explored the community around their school, identifying the locations of photographs of things they often overlook, and studied how nature recycles dead trees and leaves.
- Students in the intermediate grades investigated: trash and recycling, noise, the city and communities near the school, energy, natural communities, the winter environment, pesticides, air, and numerous other areas.
- Environmental Studies was also initiated in the secondary schools. Senior high students were already involved in environmental studies through project A.W.A.R.E. (A Wilderness and Research Experience). This separate, but related, project brings together up to 30 students full-time for a trimester. The students work on extended projects, many of them environmentally related. A.W.A.R.E. students also participate in bike trips, sessions at the state legislature, and wilderness backpacking, canoeing, and mountain climbing.
- Additonal environmental experiences were added in the regular junior and senior high classes. Teachers tested materials during the second year of the project and chose many to be used the following years. These materials and projects included poetry and short stories on the concerns and nature of man, a historical study of a community in southeastern Minnesota which vanished due to poor environmental practices, studies of the city community, cemetery, pollution, environment, prejudice, the future, geological studies, water studies, astronomy, and the use of cards with open-ended activities on the human and natural environments.

Other Aspects of the Program

Camping, canoeing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are additional yet important parts of the program. During the second and third years of the project a field assistant helped teachers introduce these activities. The field assistant scheduled the events, ordered the buses, cared for the equipment, planned the activities with the teachers and students, and helped conduct the activities during a trip.

Camping trips are aimed at the relationships that can be developed through this type of experience as well as the learning which takes place during the trip planning and studies performed at the camp site. The trips for elementary and secondary students are usually three to four days long and involve groups of fifteen to thirty students. Most camping trips are made to county parks near the metropolitan area. Some outstate trips have occurred and, in winter, nearby camps provide basic heat and shelter at inexpensive rates.

The snowshoeing, skiing and canoeing experiences stress studies in the areas explored. Snowshoeing has been particularly successful as classes are scheduled out (sometimes two per day) every day during the snow season. These trips to city and county parks include numerous investigations of the winter environment. The three canoes are used for aquatic studies of streams and lakes

in and near the city and on some camping expeditions in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

School Sites

Another important aspect of the project has been the development of school sites for environmental studies. Students and teachers at Motley school developed a natural area on a small triangle of park land across the street from the school. Students surveyed and mapped the lot, distributed a questionnaire to everyone in the school for their opinions on what should be done, drew plans for the lot, and then began carrying out the plan. They designated areas for prairie, deciduous forest, pine woods, and wetland habitats, made wood chip paths, dug a small pond, built a bridge over the pond, built a hill, installed stump benches, carried rocks for a rock pile at one end of the hill, built feeding stations, and planted trees, grasses, and wildflowers in the designated areas. The area has furnished learning experiences during its development and its presence by the school makes it an excellent study site for many activities. Because everyone was involved in its development, vandalism has been non-existent.

Another site development project, a courtyard at Tuttle school was initiated through the environmental studies program. Students formed a bucket brigade to transfer ten tons of gravel into the area, kindergartners made a pool and fountain, plants were put into areas receiving sunlight, spool tables and benches were constructed and decorative hangings suspended from cables. Again the success of the project was due to teachers and students working together to create an environment that would be useful in their educational programs.

A New Approach to Science

At the same time the environmental studies program was developing, a move toward revamping the text book approach to science was undertaken.

In the fall of 1971, a science resource teacher for the elementary schools was hired as the elementary resource cadre person. The major responsibility of this resource teacher was the development and coordination of a K-6 science program task and the development of the Science Center.

The primary purpose of the Science Center is the implementation and continuing development of the science curriculum. The Center is a focal point for science curriculum implementation. The first step in forming a Center then, was the determining of just what the curriculum was to be. The philosophical guidelines of the science program

has called for a program that emphasizes an open-ended, process-oriented approach to science teaching. In addition, the program was to stress the following conceptual strands:

Variety and Similarity
Symetry–Patterns
Interaction and Interdependence
Continuity and Change
Evolution and Adaptation

This emphasis requires large quantities of materials that are student manipulative in nature. Materials that fit these criteria were ordered from such innovative curriculum projects as Elementary School Science (ESS) and Science Curriculum Improvement Study (SCIS). In addition, Minneapolis Units, which were in some cases, modifications of some of the ESS units were also purchased. As the science center developed, over ninety science units became available to the classroom teacher.

The model of operation for the Science Center calls for the participating schools to pool funds to be used for the purchase and upkeep of the curricular materials. These materials are then shared from school to school. The Center acts as a facilitating agency that coordinates and maintains the science materials as they go from school to school. There is a substantial savings in dollars through the shared use of these materials. This sharing of materials provides for a wider range of science units than could be afforded by a single school. A thirty hour aide is assigned the responsibility of maintaining and delivering the science units in the Center.

Naturally, with the addition of the variety of materials available to teachers, in-service demands increased substantially. The final half of the 1971-72 school year was devoted primarily to in-servicing teachers in the use of the materials and the philosophy inherent in the science program. Workshops, retreats, teacher to teacher meetings, small group meetings and cooperative teaching all aided in the process.

Another major function of the resource teacher was the establishment of a governing model for the center that would insure the Center's existance after the federal funding ran out. A steering committee was established to govern the center. The steering committee members are expected to have a thorough understanding of the science curriculum including its goals and objectives. They are constantly involved in the evaluation of curriculum materials, as well as identifying areas of need. Based on their knowledge of the science curriculum and the needs of the Center, the steering committee generates a yearly operating budget. The committee then presents this budget to the principals of member schools for their evaluation and final decision. Once money has been allocated to the Center from the schools, it is the decision of the steering committee on how the money will be spent.

The only real way to evaluate the science program today is to recall the program prior to the SEA grant. The program has moved from a non-articulated textbook based, content centered program, to a manipulative materials based program that tries to stress science processes, affective development and content in a balanced approach. During the 1974-75 school year over 250 science units were sent out from the Center to classroom teachers. This is a rather impressive number when one considers that there are less than 45 classroom teachers in the SEA schools that are served by the Center.

The Living Materials Center will continue to operate as a city-wide agency serving the SCIS portion of the science program. It has already functioned one full year under strictly local funds so for all intensive purposes it is no longer a federal program. Because of the apparent success, secondary teachers have expressed an interest in the feasibility of having the Center provide not only organisms needed for their programs, but to also serve as a teaching site for students.

The environmental studies program continues into the fifth year of Southeast Alternatives without the aid of the environmental studies specialist or field assistant. This has been possible because of its connection with the science materials center, as the science resource teacher adds the administration of this program to his already heavy list of responsibilities. The field activities (camping, canoeing, snowshoeing, and skiing) are still high in demand. Because teachers need help to schedule and conduct these activities and because a great deal of time is required for repair and maintenance of the equipment, the need for the full field assistant becomes more and more apparent.

The future years present many serious problems as there will no longer be a full time resource teacher serving the five schools and administering the Materials Center. The Center will remain, staffed by an aide. This will enable teachers to continue using the activities and supply kits. However, new activities, ideas, and inservice training will decrease considerably and the assistance with the field activities will no longer exist. Because the schools consider the field activities as a high priority, different types of equipment are relocated in designated buildings.

The success of an environmental studies program depends on its integration into the total school curriculum. In this respect the program has been extremely successful, especially at the elementary level. More than five hundred activity kits are used in the classrooms of the five schools during a year, and the schedule for field activities is completely filled.

Most important, however, is the fact that the environmental studies program has caused teachers to see that this kind of educational experience is successful and a valid part of learning. This, then, has sparked their creativity enabling them to use the techniques offered by the program activities to expand and augment other activities they develop for their classes. Consequently, numerous environmental activities are now taking place in the schools spawned by the program and going far beyond it.

Billie Jo Smith served as the Environmental Sciences Specialist on the Southeast Alternatives Teacher Cadre. Before joining Southeast Alternatives she had been a classroom teacher in both secondary and elementary schools and had worked in curriculum development and teacher training at the Minnesota Environmental Sciences Foundation, Inc.

She is now coordinating Title IV, Part C Urban Environmental Studies Curriculum, developing curriculum materials and implementing them in the Minneapolis Schools.

Kenneth Jeddeloh has been teaching Science since 1964, first in California, then at the University of Minnesota Laboratory School and in the Minneapolis Public School system. He served as an SEA K-12 Science Resource teacher for two years and is currently a secondary science resource teacher for Minneapolis Public Schools.

Inside Community Education... A Total Learning Experience For All Ages, Interests, Needs

By James Cramer and Elizabeth Fuller

"The dedication is to recognize needs, changes and innovations, and respond to them."

"To see something where nothing existed before" is a basic, personal need identified by one of the more than 11,590 people currently learning, growing, contributing to the Community Education programs offered in Southeast Alternatives.

Community Education began in Minneapolis in 1968; during those early years Becky Lattimore was coordinator for the Southeast area and worked to bring an awareness of the potential community use of the schools and to involve as many community residents as possible in the development of programs, use of space, people, and places. Cooperation and harmony built through the years has resulted in a unique cooperative effort which includes the schools, parks, and even local business people in devising programs and courses to meet the needs of people and to fit these into appropriate spaces wherever they may be found.

The largest single part of the community learning program is concentrated at Marshall-University High School (MUHS). This is a curriculum-broadened program which offers classes, seminars, workshops and other learning experiences, many of them available nowhere else in the Twin Cities. One of the goals of the Marshall-U program is to be responsive to community interests and individuals. A foundation for learning in the arts, literature and in activity-oriented experiences is integral to the course offerings since it is through life enhancement that education becomes relevant.

Part of the success of the Marshall-U program is its location, according to Melissa Marks, Assistant Coordinator. "The University area has a population concerned with learning and self improvement." But the programs at Marshall-U also reach a community that extends beyond the Minneapolis-St. Paul urban area with nearly 55% of the students traveling from areas as near as Northeast Minnea-

polis and as far away as Wisconsin.

In addition to adult oriented courses which attract people from upper elementary school age to senior citizens to Marshall-U Monday through Thursday evenings, there is an activity center for children. As one ten-year old says, "I was afraid it would be for babies, but it is just for kids. I paint and play games like Scrabble and I love the leader."

> "Opportunities exist for a 12 month, 12-18 hour learning day."

SEA Community Education stresses individual and community involvement. Opportunities exist for a 12 month, 12-18 hour learning day. Programs are available every day of the week, rather than being confined to the usual five day school week. For example, an outdoor activities series on weekends and a family recreation program have proved successful during the past year. Because education is interpreted as a life long process, an experience essential to the growth of each human being, a process that is fun, rewarding intellectually, socially and personally, Southeast Alternatives Community Education attempts to provide learning opportunities without age restrictions and available throughout the day, week and year. Choices in curriculum and learning style are offered school age children in the regular program each day, but also it is offered to pre-schoolers, adults, and older adults through Community Education.

The particular dedication of this part of the total learning program is to recognize needs, changes and innovations and respond to them.

Each quarter nearly 150 courses ranging from bike repair to horseback riding to Russian are offered. Each of the Southeast schools has some Community Education activities. Pratt Continuous Progress, Marcy Open and Tuttle Contemporary elementary schools and Southeast Free School (K-12) provide programs on a regular basis and also schedule activities as needs arise. Tuttle school in cooperation with Van Cleve Park has provided many opportunities for senior citizens. Bruce Graff, Coordinator, reports that nearly 100 senior citizens each week participate in a program based at Van Cleve. Among contributions the senior citizens have made to Tuttle are developing and making games for the reading center.

Another program which originated at Tuttle is the Latch Key, and after school activities program for elementary students whose parents work. Latch Key developed when it was discovered that an important neighborhood concern was programs for kids between school time and the end of the work day. Recently the S.E. Free School became a second Latch Key location. The program is funded by the Minnesota Child Care Facilities Act and fees paid by parents. Latch Key is a licensed program and currently serves close to one hundred Southeast area children. A day-long summer program will also be available.

Tuttle School hopes to help establish a Meals on Wheels program and a group dining site for senior citizens in the near future. Neighborhood churches and service groups may become partners to Community Education in developing this venture.

Shaping programs, tailoring them to fit the particular needs of people and devising ways of pinpointing individual and community concerns have become important processes. Polling community organizations such as the Southeast Improvement Association has resulted in many programs not usually found in Community Education. A good example of meeting community needs is found in the "New Life for Your Old Home" seminars now in its fourth year. The seminars originated as a practical need for information about caring for remodeling the typical homes found in the area. The seminar was developed by a community design committee which gathered information, secured support from city officials and professional assistance from housing experts. The committee also arranged for demonstration houses and instruction. It continues to function as a review committee, revamping the seminars and its content as needed. For example, it was decided to divide the seminar in two parts this year: Winter quarter concentrated on rehabilitation of old homes; the Spring quarter dealt with the maintenance skills and helped participants build confidence in his or her ability to care for a house. Next year the seminars will expand to include other communities in the Minneapolis area based upon the SEA model.

Parks, schools, the University of Minnesota shops, the loft of a local bookstore, a motorcycle repair shop and neighborhood churches currently provide learning spaces in Southeast. Some courses are short, only one or two sessions, while others last eight weeks or longer. Some have a kind of floating participation, with people registering for the entire course or specific sessions. The courses have been described as a "cure for the blahs," or as "refreshing as a winter cruise." People call community education an opportunity for building personal relationships, renewing or updating old skills, acquiring new knowledge in a sense of adventure, and as a journey for personal

identity.

Norma Olson, a highly involved instructor, developer of courses, and shaper of ideas, says in her painting courses that she encourages people to "try to paint like a child, enjoy the color, just relaxing along...bump a second color up against your favorite color and see what happens". Sharing ideas, philosophies and insights is an important part of Community Education for its faculty members. Inservice training and evaluation are a part of this process with training provided at every level. The Minneapolis Public Schools conducts city-wide training sessions for coordinators; Marshall-U High has quarterly orientation and training opportunities for instructors. These sessions cover a wide variety of topics from curriculum theories, to teaching techniques, to personal observations and experiences.

Harlan Copeland, Professor of Adult Education, University of Minnesota has been particularly helpful to Marshall-U instructors. Regular informal sessions have been held for instructors and potential instructors. The diversity of subject matter, what constitutes quality adult instruction in various kinds of courses, as well as methods, materials, skills to be developed, and understanding the motivation of adult learners are among subjects at these sessions. A strong feeling of cooperation and meaningful concern characterizes the spirit among Southeast Community Education instructors. One of the most encouraging aspects of the program is that so many students in one subject become instructors of another.

Diane Amussen, a former New Yorker and teacher of a course in children's literature in Community Education is also a student of weaving. "What I realized was that I'm in my forties, and I've been chugging along and doing all sorts of things and my mind is set in a certain way. In weaving I had to try something new. I and everyone else in the weaving class thought,'we'll never be able to do it.' I think that's the first reaction of an adult, or someone coming back, I'll never be able to do it and we all find out we can."

Ms. Amussen also feels that she was trying to learn to see things differently and her attempts to try new things were a part of that. "I don't think I would have gone to the University for it, because I was experimenting."

This freedom to experiment seems to be important to teachers and students. Lee Colby, a teacher of courses in SEA Community Education, says one of her personal rewards was taking a belly dancing course. Most of the classes Ms. Colby conducts are based on her ideas about the need people have expressed for a sense of personal involvement and support, especially in today's society with its emphasis on change, changing roles and self awareness. "I do believe there are a lot of women out there who need to and want to be with other people during the time when kids are in school or nursery school. They don't want to be isolated or stuck at home. It's just a matter of reaching them so they come to a course," she says. Ms. Colby's Life Awareness course began as an eight-week seminar; more than a year later the original group is still meeting. What began as an experiment has now become an institution. According to Ms. Colby, "Community Education is a way to rub off rust, regain confidence." People liberation . . . male and female, is a strong force in education, especially community education, she feels.

> "An opportunity for renewing relationships, updating old skills and as a journey for personal adventure . . ."

A good deal of discussion has focused on the high school student and whether he or she could receive credit for community education programs. The potential is good, but there are some obstacles; for example, traditionally youngsters have been held to school attendance during the day, and teachers have had to be a part of a particular system or school in order to be considered qualified. The recent involvement of persons of all ages and the development of day and evening programs make changes in this system possible. The flexibility in programming learning experiences appropriate to high school students and adults would serve both groups better than the more traditional approach. Community Education is assisting the traditional K-12 approach to programming in re-evaluating and in breaking down artificial barriers based on age and experience.

There is a great deal of interest throughout Minneapolis and particularly in the Southeast Alternatives schools in building alliances in the community and in integrating learning which takes place outside the school. SEA is an innovator in this integrative process and it is paying off for students, faculty and community people. As schools become community-centered, seeking to serve educational needs rather than control them, they become more of a community force, more reflective of the individuals who support them.

High school students are beginning to realize opportunities in SEA and other parts of the city for learning outside the traditional school day. Volunteer work, group activities with teachers acting as facilitators, working with individuals of all ages. Through this extension of learning, solutions for many former school problems seem to be emerging.

A learning exchange, an educational resource network, will soon be a part of the Community Education program in SEA. This network will attempt to connect student and teacher . . . student being anyone with a specific learning need not now met through regular channels, and teacher being anyone who possesses the skills and who is willing to share them. It is anticipated that this would set up one-to-one opportunities for short or more long-term learning experiences from studying a foreign language to becoming a juggler.

SEA Community Education recently joined with the University of Minnesota, Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Committee, the

City of Minneapolis Planning and Development Department, the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the City Council to conduct a survey "The Southeast/Cedar Riverside Community: Finding Out How People Feel About Their Neighborhood". The results of the Survey are important to those working in Community Education programs and services and also made the community aware of a process which could bring together and encourage various organizations and individuals. It is expected that the new relationships will go beyond the initial usefulness of this survey.

A random sample of the 9,435 households in the Southeast communities was developed with 1,314 households actually queried. More than 91% of these returned their questionaires.

Among comments made by survey respondents were several favorable to developing more community learning experiences. As one resident put it, "This is the center of so many cultural and entertainment possibilities. It is alive, moving and different from any other community I know."

More than half of those surveyed said they would like to use public school facilities for adult education classes and special workshops. Many referred to an interest in expanded opportunities in education, community activities and special events they feel are unique to the Southeast area; several felt the schools – elementary, high school and the University and other colleges in the area.– influence their desire to live in this area. "There is plenty of food for the mind and soul . . . opportunities to learn and interact with others," according to one resident.

Community Education in SEA is a link, a means of connecting people, resources, ideas and community needs in a viable way. SEA has been in a unique position regarding Community Education because it is committed to breaking down barriers between schools and other community agencies and between people from various areas and neighborhoods. SEA is proving itself as a special entity developed by people who assessed their own needs and who continue to have a strong voice in determining ways to serve themselves and their children. It has been possible for SEA Community Education to become part of the life long search for learning, the need to be in meaningful contact with others which is central to people of all ages and backgrounds. It is this need which will continue to foster Community Education.

Community Involvement

By Meredith Poppele

"It is obvious that educators and families basically have a cooperative rather than a competitive interest regarding children's education."

Community Involvement in the schools is more than an idea whose time has come. Scattered about the country are school districts in which it is one of the realities of public education.

While any member of the community may occasionally interact with the schools, it is among the school staffs, the parents and the district administration that the relationships are most significantly changing. Members of these groups make a new impact on each other and on the schools. Student choice, within and between programs, is of central importance in SEA and is discussed elsewhere in this volume. Later in the paper there will be note of the remarkable degree to which Free School students participate in their school's governance.

The major power yield in this process is by administrators – the building administrator and the area or district administrators. Through building councils and enlarged possibilities of staff meetings, through the project-wide council and two Teacher Center boards, staff, parents, and for the secondary students are increasing their influence on decisions which affect them and the children.

Official advisory and governance bodies are the most obvious aspect of community intervention into the operations of our schools. Yet even more immediate in impact are the hundreds of volunteers who teach and tutor.

Nowhere was community will more essential than in the initial decision to request public education alternatives for Southeast Minneapolis. Local citizens were responding to the nationally-known writings of Charles Silberman, Jonothan Kozol, Herbert Kohl, and several others. The climate was ripe in 1971 for radical experimentation.

In the Marcy community, parents were interested in an open school especially to provide continuity from a graifying co-operative nursery school. From the Tuttle and Pratt-Motley communities similarly came a share of progressive activists. The Experimental Schools office of the National Institute of Education generated the idea of alternatives, and the local community, as well as school officials, found the idea highly appropriate to the ideological variety of Southeast.

Having professionals who anticipated the positive value of community participation was seminal to the whole community involvement movement. Dr. James Kent, then Director at Marshall-University High School, became the instigator and planner for the formal proposal to submit to NIE. He chose to hire one lay person from each of Southeast's three communities to join the long discussion meetings which developed the proposal. He added a professional person representing each proposed model. This committee brainstormed and wrote and kept in regular contact with the community. Flyers went home from the schools each Friday outlining the questions for discussion on Saturday, and community people attended the Saturday sessions according to their interests.

The eventual proposal, as approved and funded by NIE, provided specifically for bringing the community whose children were being served, into the decision-making process.

The degree of parent participation in advising has been in fairly direct proportion to the newness or revolutionariness of the program. Hence Tuttle Contemporary School has maintained its PTA as the vehicle for parents and that community has not chosen to intervene broadly in the running of the school. It is noteworthy that the PTA did establish the screening committee to find a new principal in June, 1974. The Board also advises the principal on matters regarding community involvement.

Pratt-Motley Continuous Progress School maintained the PTA with its traditional functions and added a coordinating committee of volunteer parents and staff to provide good communication between the two buildings of the program. When the program was compressed into the Pratt building in 1974, the coordinating committee was replaced by a Principal's advisory council comprised of elected parents, teachers on a rotating basis, several of the support staff, and the principal, who were to advise on matters of personnel, program and budget. Frequently, the interests of the Council and the PTA overlapped, and the community

> "Parent participation in advising has been in fairly direct proportion to the . . . revolutionariness of the program . . ."

hopes to arrive at a single advisory and support body by June, 1976. Parents have served, through one or the other, on most of the personnel selection committees since the birth of the project. The bodies jointly undertook an evaluation of the school's mathematics curriculum in 1974.

Within the first year of the project, Marcy Open School and the Free School organized systematic involvement of parents in decision-making for the school. Marcy's Advisory Council was formed December 6, 1971, after very real consideration of making a policy council instead. "The majority felt that a positive foundation for mutual trust and cooperation could best be built with (an advisory council)," the parent coordinator reported in the February, 1972, SEA newspaper. The Council agenda indicated priorities, including "many items concerning the operation of the school and various policies related to it, such as police-school liaison programs, M-U High Policy Board governance issue, desegregation plans, Marcy budget, and communication to and feedback from all parents via small group meetings..." The Council subsequently dropped 'Advisory' from its title.

In April, 1972, the Free School elected a governing board composed of parents, students and staff, which was to be the decision-making body for the school. The board was intended to review policy, make policy, and assist in the hiring and selection of staff. At the end of that school year, the board issued this statement: "The Free School Governing Board will be refined to create a model of representative community decision-making that works, and in so doing, set a precedent for parent, staff and student decision-making for Minneapolis as a whole."

The 1974 election of fifteen-year-old Chris Capra as Chairperson of the Free School Governing Board was a landmark in student participation in school governance. Ms. Capra believes the board

> ". . . it was a place for power struggles, recently it is a place where we work toward team decision . . . "

has gradually come to be taken more seriously. "In the past it was a place for power struggles; recently it is a place where we work toward team decision." A major achievement in the 74-75 year was the writing in committee and approval by the Governing Board of the first three articles of the accreditation statement.

The principal's advisory council at MUHS consists of representatives from the student council, the staff and the PTSA. It has not yet been called upon to serve as broadly as many observers would like. While most academic planning is done within the separate departments, the council could potentially be very helpful on all pertinent aspects of school and program management by reacting to proposed changes and offering suggestions, by easing the isolation of the principal in tough decisions, and by improving communications with their sending bodies.

The new elements in the 1973-76 plan for MUHS were a response to concerned parents who wanted continuity from the three feeder elementary programs. The faculty and administrators had to be persuaded from outside that secondary alternatives were desirable. The various school councils also persuaded NIE's project officer, Cynthia Parsons, of the need for junior high alternatives, and she in turn prodded the planning committee. Some departments solicited student and parent evaluation outlining needs for the future planning. Parents did some of the writing. The process was slow and tough but produced a program the community supported. (Interested parents subsequently accepted the invitation to help define the goals and objectives of the junior high open school, and ultimately performed the same task for the 9-12 open school whose inception had been generated similarly.)

> ". . . We have accomplished substantial long-ranged planning."

For the faculty, it was a rare achievement. "We have completed a professional experience known only to a minute percentage of educators anywhere. We have accomplished substantial long-range planning . . . " said Dr. William Gaslin of the MUHS faculty, Chief Planning Coordinator for the 1973-76 plan.

Hiring school personnel is a stunning advancement in community power. For non-professional people to participate in hiring school personnel in school districts anywhere is rare. In SEA it is part of the record.

Free School parents and students have selected the school staff from the very beginning. They conducted the search and hiring of the principal in 1972. The Marcy Council selected its new principal in early 1973; a Pratt PTA committee chose

a principal in 1973; Tuttle's PTA, as noted, screened candidates and selected the principal in 1974. The Southeast Council approved the appointment of the new MUHS principal in 1974, but no true choice was involved. A committee of the Southeast Council interviewed the candidates for director to replace Dr. Kent for the final year of the project. West Area Superintendent Dr. Marvin Trammel accepted the committee's choice. Marcy's Council has had good cooperation from the MPS personnel department to fill positions with teachers well suited to the Open School. The principal(s) at Pratt (and Tuttle) have generally included parents on the selection committee for new classroom teachers.

The evolution of the Free School Governing Board and the Marcy Council is continuing. Members have learned important skills by which to meet the challenges and tasks they have accepted. It has taken nearly four years of experience for those bodies to become as sound as they are now. Elsewhere in Minneapolis, other energetic school communities hope they can study what these two councils have come to be, and replicate for themselves a body much like one or the other, saving four years of struggle and frustration.

That dream dismays some of the deeply committed members of SEA governing councils. They believe newly forming councils can indeed benefit from understanding the successes and failures of their SEA counterparts, but also that SEA must find a way to teach the intrinsic value of that evolutionary process. They believe that many lessons on governance can only be learned by working through some tough questions. Moreover, the administrator and the staff and parent members require extended time together to develop the mutual confidence and trust essential if a council is to become a genuine power.

Both the councils of the Teacher Center benefit from community representation. One of the eight members of the Teacher Center Board is an interested lay parent, and three are professional public school staff members, all named by the superintendent at the recommendation of the director and the Southeast Council. The Council names directly three community members, while each member school staff, according to its size, elects one or two staff members to the In-Service Committee of the Teacher Center, a body immediately responsible for allocating staff-development resources. The diversity of the membership of both groups seems clearly to enrich deliberations and generate faith in the decision making process.

It is fair to say that without a courageous administrator willing to initiate and back the gamble of community participation in governance, one who encourages councils to take risks, to venture past the traditional limits and to labor to establish their credibility, the Southeast Council would fall markedly short of the self-confidence and external respect it has gained. Dr. Kent established the Southeast Council in 1972, stating his reasons. "I want a strong Council for if we are to improve public education, we need to be open to wise counsel, including constructive criticism. I believe that such a council, when fully organized, will be able to help give leadership and direction to the Southeast Alternatives Program." Since the charter of the new Council intruded upon Board of Education functions, Dr.Kent negotiated that charter with the Board in order to test new forms of governance and new forms of decentralized decision-making.

The Council is composed of students, parents, faculty and staff elected from their respective school organizations. It is the project-wide model of community involvement in decision-making and has numerous responsibiliteis in addition to advising the SEA director on matters of K-12 program, resource allocation and personnel. For example, it reviews evaluation reports and may make recommendations for future evaluation plans; serves as the Community Education Council for Southeast schools; determines membership on screening committees for K-12 positions; evaluates the director; monitors progress towards the objectives of the Southeast cluster; informs itself by internal exchanges among the members; serves as a community/staff sounding board and keeps the several schools informed about its deliberations and actions.

By nurturing the Southeast Council to healthy independence Dr. Kent has sent an example to the school principals and other administrators in the project and beyond to dare parallel ventures. By permitting the Southeast Council to assess annually the director's performance, he has invited all those administrators to accept evaluation by their respective councils. The Southeast Council members have evaluated the director for three years now,and the results have been made public. Not all the SEA principals have yet invited the same assessment.

In the '72-'73 school year, the Council devoted six or seven meetings to the '73-'76 plan, reviewing and making recommendations.

The single largest achievement of the '73-'74 year

was winning a year's delay from Superintendent John Davis in having SEA placed administratively in one of the district's three decentralized Areas. After considerable study of developments throughout the city, Council members concluded the move would be premature. In the fall of 1974 the Council again focused on making an informed area choice and in maintaining good information exchange with the Southeast community on the issue. The Council voted unanimously to recommend inclusion in the West Area. Dr. Davis concurred.

Council members anticipate that the work of the Long Range Citywide Facilities Committee will be its prime interest in '75–'76. Southeast's schools are small and old, hence vulnerable. No one believes that the vitality of community involvement in its schools would remain if the schools were to be closed and students bused to similar programs elsewhere.

"No one believes that the vitality of community involvement in its schools would remain if the schools were to be closed . . ."

Marshall-University High School students have for many years had open to them the possibility of the community as a resource through Urban Arts and independent study contracts. The inception of SEA brought the Off-Campus Learning Experience which has now, unfortunately, lapsed. SEA has enlarged the sphere of students eligible for schooling out-of-school.

Marcy and the Free School emphatically seek to have available to even the youngest children the facilities and expertise of the cities. For example, a twelve-year old Free School student formally interned at the state legislature with his district representative, and an Open School primary classroom studied paper and toured the Minneapolis Star and Tribune plant and the University of Minnesota press.

Elementary school teachers have always taken the trouble to arrange instructive and recreational field trips for their students. Now, with flexible school scheduling, a working policy to use the community as laboratory, and a staff person with some time dedicated to finding sites and making arrangements, the frequency of such ventures multiplies.

Marcy's Other People, Other Places center exists to help children individually or in small groups discover, investigate and use the resources of the community or the city. All staff members have a copy of the reference resource book so that students can make plans to use community resources for their school projects.

"Reliable volunteers can be the lifesavers in the tidal wave of inflation . . ."

In March of 1975 an entire sixth grade class at Tuttle, in groups of five and six, moved out into the city guided by parent volunteers, to get real life experiences in finance, advertising, consumerism, nutrition, modern medicine, sewer treatment or the state department of weights and measures. A parent shared his/her expertise at each visit.

It is highly unlikely, perhaps impossible, to maintain the alternatives and their heavy emphasis on individualizing education, without large numbers of volunteers. A possible exception is MUHS, for which there exists no basis for comparison since it has not yet had appreciable numbers of volunteers in the classroom. In the three K-6 schools and the Free School, volunteers contribute immensely to the children's education through tutoring, teaching skills and enrichment, keeping records and taking on any support tasks a teacher requests. Reliable volunteers can be the lifesavers in the tidal wave of inflation.

Paying a Community Resource Coordinator at least a half-time salary to recruit and place volunteers is an investment that pays off in SEA schools at several times its cost. In addition to bringing community resources into the schools, the coordinator assists in educating the community. There is widespread school and community support for permanent local funding for the CRC's.

It is in Community Education that the broadest spectrum of the public involves itself with the schools – as planners, teachers and learners. Diverse community members comprise the advisory council. Many of the instructors live in Southeast Minneapolis. The nearly 2000 students enrolled quarterly represent every segment of the population from schoolchildren to octogenarians.

When the Southeast Community Education staff set goals, plan programs and define their own jobs, they work with these intentions: life-long learning opportunities, involving people in decision-making,

community improvement, cooperation in the planning and delivering of social services, better use of human, physical and financial resources, increased use of school facilities as needed, and accelerated program and acitivities for children, youth and adults.

Minneapolis received the National Community Education Association's 1974 award for serving as an outstanding model in the field of community education, and SEA's Marshall-University High School has the city's largest community school.

Internal evaluation provides a systematic means to tabulate the reactions of all parents to the schools via an annual parent survey. Not only are responses to all items tallied, but every individual remark a parent writes is forwarded to the appropriate personnel. The SEA newspaper publishes the results of the survey. The Level I Evaluation Team makes recommendations to each school based upon the survey results and requests each school to present a plan for implementation, or explain why it chooses not to implement.

In June, 1972, the internal evaluators conducted a week-long seminar/workshop for 37 stipended parents to explain evaluation techniques, solicit suggestions regarding evaluation and collect over four hundred "concerns" which were passed on to the administrators.

SEA's newspaper has been a good vehicle for communication, informing parents of distinctive events and programs in each of the schools and reporting project-wide matters clearly. Although the overall tone of the paper is congratulatory, the editor and project director do not censor, and do print parent columns and letters, whether cheering or critical.

As a further help, the schools have always encouraged parents to visit and see the programs in operation, especially if they are considering a transfer within SEA.

The participatory process is undeniably cumbersome. Most parents, since their vocations are not in the midst of school affairs, need extra time and materials by which to inform themselves. The diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints on advisory councils makes discussions often lengthy and far-ranging – sometimes irrelevant.

But the payoffs are substantial. In the first place, there are "lots of good ideas lying around in the community that school people haven't tapped yet", as one of MUHS's most involved and respected teachers states. Advisory councils provide an official forum for such good ideas.

In the second place, the schools adopt practices the community is more likely to support. Not only have community representatives helped make the decisions, but the rationale has been thrashed out in a public setting.

In the third place, lay council members and observers receive an education in the complexities of administering public education. More often than not, they grow to appreciate the tough job of a principal and a superintendent, instead of criticizing and condeming as is commonly the reaction to decisions arrived at silently, out of the public view. Support is growing for increasing community participation in all the city's schools. The Accountability Project was an independent study committee of citizens sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools and funded by the Minnesota Council on Quality Education. For the final year of the 1972-1975 project, the citizen advisory board selected as its topic Community Participation in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Among the committee's conclusions after its seven-month study was that, "Even though there has been an increasing amount of citizen participation in the schools during recent years, and despite efforts at administrative decentralization, it appears that the decision-making power of the professions – in terms of planning, operation and evaluation – has not been significantly influenced by the 'consumers' (parents, community and students)". Its recommendations were firmly in the direction of increasing real community participation and in facilitating that through improved communications. The Minneapolis Tribune on May 29 editorially endorsed the entire report, concluding that "The study's recommendations provide a good basis for new efforts to assure real, broadly-based community participation in the community's schools."

It is obvious that educators and families basically have a cooperative rather than a competitive interest regarding children's education. Recognizing parents and professionals as partners in the raising of children is the conceptual undergirding for drawing parents into significant direct participation in public schooling.

Meredith Poppele is a Southeast resident and parent with three children in SEA schools and one pre-schooler. She has served terms on the Teacher Center In-Service Committee, Teacher Center Board, Pratt Advisory Council, Southeast Council, worked as the Motley CPI visitor coordinator, and reported for the SEA newspaper.

"Schools will be more effective if the people who teach/learn in them together participate in the educational program . . ." Here named are some of the volunteers who helped in 1975.

Peter Ackerberg Brian Aldrich Holly Armijo Joe Armijo Heather Baum Katheryn Bennett Ronald Bennett Joan Carlson Bill Carlson Linda Crutcher Agnes Daemon Carole Drake Jim Drake Diane Fitzgerald Dan Fitzgerald Medra Grandquist Luther Grandquist Cindy Hoppee Sigurd Hoppee Ann Jaede Eric Jaede Tom Johnson Dainin Katagiri Luke Lam Wanda McCaa Bob McCaa Pat McCrary Esther McLaughlin Dave McLaughlin JoAnne Metz Lester Metz Linda Ojile Michael Ojile Ruth Anne Olson Vivian Patton Linnea Peterson Marilyn Peterson Mary Ann Roland Jerri Sudderth Bill Sudderth Dorothy Marden Donna Sherlock Linda Freed Jeffery Youngstrom Beth Holz Sue Wallin Frances Eggen Kathy Ackland Glenice Anderson Alan Anderson Joel Barker Iraj Bashiri Carol Bashiri Tisha Clary Bob Clary Bill Crutcher Cindy Cutter Arlene Drier Ted Farmer Pat Franczyk Liz Fuller Judi Heath Derek Legg Matti Marrow Marilyn Matheny Dave Matheny David Peck Michael Priadka Cindee Priadka Jantje Simpson Bob Stellar Jerri Sudderth Marx Swanholm Marlene Valentinetti Mary Varvares David Warden Ben Zimmerman Brenda Zimmerman LeAnn Johnson Kathy Ackland Rich Spencer Debbie Cann Viola Tucker Susan Wallin Terri Odegaard Peggy Haggen Sara Burstein Kathryn Bennett Lorraine Orth LouAnn Wood Rosemary Hartup Arlene Cardozo Philip Anderson Joyce Anderson Joel Barker Bonnie Chisholm Nancy Cooper Sandra Dekker Alex Dekker Elizabeth Emerson Judy Engstrom Nancy Evans Chris Hall Karen Irvin Mirza Janecky Charlanne Karapetian Petie Kladstrup Don Kladstrup Ralph Kosek Jim Kunze Naomi Loper James Marshall Liz Miller Corky Nikila Bill Nikila Ron Pitzer Karen Starr Karen Teske Sid Teske Ed VanCleve Joe Waiwaiole Sharon Waiwaiole Betsy Zimmerman Meg Harvey Miriam Schanfield Karen Patton Kathleen Dunn Ann Ferguson Sheely Tabor Leo Couette Officer Gertz Eugene Hickey Bill Houston Ella Ausland Julia Copeland Sandra Dekker Alex Dekker Arlene Drier Jack Drier Pat Hallin Donald Kahn Sheldon Lehman Janette Mens Trudi Peoples Oscar Rosengren Mim Solberg Timi Stevens Bill Stockton Joyce Stockton Donna Sherlock Sid Teske Don Theiling Ben Zimmerman Brenda Zimmerman Esther McLaughlin Martha Eaves Bill Houston Greg Smith Dave Coulter Dave Colwell Karen Patton Fred Anderson Phil Anderson Gerry Wall Fred Nauer Liz Cruiskis Pam Lehmann Anne Rennick Carolyn Crane Tom Foley Mary Jo Kuusisto Bud Krahling Ted Russell Karen Barnett Lisbeth Carlson Marti Colwell Dave Coulter Judy Coulter Fran Davis Richard Davis Arlington Fink Barbara Graves Ruth Jagolino Barbara Johnston Doris Marshall Susan Miler Hede Morsch Linda Ojile Cindy Russell Ted Russell Penny Spinosa Gayle Swann Lloyd Wittstock Betty Stahl Doug Jacobsen Fred Anderson Greg Smith Warren Solochek Pamela Albert Carolyn Blake Mary Bouska Margaret Burton Bill Carlson Paul Casperson Millie Casperson Nancy Conroy Phyliss Cruciani Liz Cruiskis Jim Drake Carole Drake Marty Evans Connie Fabumni Liz Fuller Agnes Goodmanson Meg Harvey Rosie Kopet Mary Jo Kuusisto Lester Metz JoAnne Metz Norma Rowe Pam Widlund Patty Prisky Gayle Swann Jim Smith Karen Patton Esther McLaughlin Helen Lifson Karen Askins Davis Bennett Dave Mruz Jutta Schubert Christopher Lane Warren Wimmer Chris Warren Joanne Probst Lislie Troeltzsch Emily Brown Mary Alice Kopf Lorraine Orth Penny Spinosa Leo Couette Wanda McCaa Kathy Balkman Jane Bergman Barbara Brunetti Jerry Brunetti Tisha Clary Vickie Coifman Bob Coifman Cathy Collins Terry Collins Arlene Drier Jack Drier Sue Evans Arlington Fink Christine Gilmore Katie Houser Bob Heine Janice Heine Paul Higgins Ann Higgins Diane Kepner Brenda Knapper Bobbie Kuerbs Catherine Mukamuri Wendy O'Connor Martha Salinas Barb Schipper Martha Schlueter Charles Schlueter Bill Stockton Joyce Stockton Lynn Wozniak Chris Hauwiller Marilyn Matheny Elaine Wynne Derek Legg Dode Gustad Bill Carlson Diana Lee Sharon Shiraiwa Nancy Wacker Genene McNabb Roberta Benedict John Renzaglia Ann Wendel Wanda McCaa Colleen Admundson Gordy Amundson Mary Jo Bateman Harold Blochowiak Ann Blochowaik Wally Boreman Kathy Borman Herbert Brown Janyee Brown Barbara Brunetti Mary Kay Dooley Pam Hasselberg John Koonce Nancy Koonce Rosie Kopet Ruth Meyer Al Milgrom Howie Schneider Mary Schneider Martha Schleuter Charles Schleuter Bob Stellar Dick Stevens Mirtha Zaidenberg Carolyn Crane Sheri Grunes Ann Rennick Davis Bennet Bill Whelan Pat Hanson Ann Larson Pam Albert Nathel Jordan Ted Kohn Lois Skinner Timi Stevens Nancy Cooper Liz Curiskis Ricki Olson Suzanne Becker Priscilla Buffalohead Roger Buffalohead Jody Butts David Butts Millie Casperson Paul Casperson Dave Colwell Marti Colwell Nancy Conroy Judy Coulter Dave Coulter Dawn Dolid Joan Dudley Nancy Elliot Ron Elliot Jef Evans Marti Evans Martha Eaves Dennis Gubbrud Kari Hanson Pam Hasselberg Jim Kunze Wanda McCaa Bob McCaa Trudi Peoples Greg Perun Betty Risser Chuck Risser Ted Schullo Wendy Taylor Kathy Sarafolean George Varvares Mary Varvares Carolyn White Lydia Yue Mirtha Zaidenberg Paula Ziaskas Betty Stahl Judi Rajani Jan Michel JoAnn Jallo Joyce Winters Patricia Powers Wayne Carlson Chris Ziaskas Suhas Patankay Janice Anderson Joanne Baldwin Lee Beaty Kathy Bennett Bob Coifman Vicki Coifman Susan Delattre Ted Farmer Judy Farmer Gale Finstad Rod French Bob Friedman Susan Friedman Judy Hinzie Jim Jacobs Dorothy Jacobs Sally Jorgenson Gordon Kepner Irene Koering Linnea Peterson John Robertson Jim Smith John Stever Jill Stever Dick Swart Frank Wood Raquel Wood Carl Antus Sylvia Haas Charles Ruhl Kris Maser Mark Gengeldoff Peggy Poorwall Fred Nauer Denise Hackel Barb Harding Brian Cross Paul Gruchow Dorothy Mayer Pete Cousin Holly Armijo Edie Meier Josie Runstad Helen Lifson Ruthie Erdal Larry Johnson Martha Schleuter Janny Griswold Tripp Larry Johnson Steve Forbes Bobbie Kuerbs Pat Turner Fred Anderson Martha Schleuter Pat Franczyk Katie Hauser Fred Grittner Dave Anderssen Lauren Nickisch Pam Johnson Merry Balian Tim Hobaugh Valerie Eng Duane Hardy Ruth Burns Charles Schlueter Polly Harvat Pat Svedberg Jane Bergman Fran Davis Hede Morsch Robin Gates Barbara Seim Warren Wimmer Chris Hall Kathy Kosowski Mary Ochs Mark Gangeldorf Greg Smith Ann Blochowiak Ella Ausland Bobbie Kuerbs Debbie Fink Edith French Arthur French

Bringing Schools and Community Together

By Judith Farmer

"The major question remains whether the (School Board) is willing to think creatively about funding new positions which can build substantive community participation."

The following article is an attempt to explain, given the hazards of participant objectivity, the concepts basic to all the five Community Resource programs in this experimental project, to describe the development of each school's distinct program and to informally assess the state-of-the-art at this time and speculate about where we are going in the future. This does not pretend to be a comprehensive view of community participation; for instance, the topic of governance or decision-making is so closely intertwined with the Community Resource programs that the essays on these two topics should, perhaps, be read as one piece.

CONCEPTS BASIC TO COMMUNITY RESOURCE PROGRAMS

Community involvement, or as we prefer, community participation, is "in" today; school board candidates across the country take care to list it in platform goals, proposal writers include sections addressing it if they hope to get past the first screenings, the media seeks examples of it for their consumers. But **what is it?**

Common to all SEA Community Resource programs is the belief that the specific form that **real community participation** takes in any given school or school building **must be defined by the school community affected** – the larger school community, including administrators, staff, parents and the students.

Each school program and its community has unique needs and styles; therefore, there is no "formula," no universally applicable recipe for community participation.

We do not offer one.

What we will describe are some processes and procedures which have evolved in each SEA school, over four years, some of which might be useful in other places.

Another concept basic to all SEA Community Resource programs lies in our response to the question, "Why should schools have community

participation?" Most of those who compose the Southeast school community – administrators, staff, students and parents – share a strong commitment to and **interest in CHILDREN**. They began with the premise that **schools would be more effective** for the people who teach/learn in them **if together they participated in the educational program** they selected in ways that would accommodate their philosophy and utilize their skills, talents and time to best advantage for the students.

In Southeast there was little interest in tokenism, changing the trappings, and underneath, having the same animal doing the same work.

Neither was there widespread interest in "community control" of schools (a power takeover by parents and residents). There seemed to be far broader credence given to efforts in which all interested parties at a particular school could work together as a team, sharing responsibilities for developing and implementing that school's program.

A third commonly agreed upon concept in the SEA Community Resource picture comes into play when one realizes that even if **each school defines**, over a period of time, **what community participation means** in that school and **why** that participation is desirable and necessary, there remain the questions **"How do you bring it about; how do you build it?"**

There exist some real barriers to building that participation if there is a lack of openness, trust and commitment on the part of public school administrators and staff on the one hand, and parents and the community on the other hand to join in a teaming effort, when that effort includes working together in many different aspects of the school program.

Although signs on school building doors indicate that parents are welcome, the atmosphere inside is the real test.

From the initial planning stages of the SEA project, some extraordinary forces converged which made creditable the invitation from upper level administration to the parents and community to genuinely participate.

Among the first people hired when SEA received its planning grant were three Southeast parents and long time residents. No coffee klatch cranks these, but rather, very dedicated, experienced women with a broad working knowledge of people and the sensitivities of the Southeast neighborhood. These Community Liaisons were direct links from the SEA project office to the three neighborhoods composing Southeast Minneapolis: Diane Lassman from the University district (Marcy school neighborhood), Suzy Gammel from Prospect Park (Pratt/Motley neighborhood), and Evelyn Czaia from the Como area (Tuttle School district). They had access directly to Jim Kent, SEA Director, and began to work closely with him to design processes for involving the community in planning and writing the proposal for the project. Information and ideas began to flow back and forth from the neighborhoods and schools to the SEA office through various channels such as the Saturday morning open meetings in the Tuttle basement when, hot coffee in hand, anyone – teachers, principals, parents, students – could come to read and react to the latest draft of the proposal and suggest new ideas or revisions for the following week's draft.

A group called Southeast Parents For Open Classrooms, who had organized the year before, was used extensively in writing the Open School portion of the proposal. The Free School was included in the proposal largely because of a persistently persuasive group of secondary students and their parents who wanted a K-12 alternative different from the elementary Open School.

After SEA received its grant, the Community Liaisons, joined by Sally French from the Free School, continued as SEA staff members responsible for getting information to the entire community about the new schools so families could choose wisely the school that would best suit each child. They kept the SEA director abreast of concerns, problems, and ideas from the community. In addition, they served as communication links between their own individual school and neighborhood, and together they helped build a sense of community among the three distinct neighborhoods in Southeast.

Besides the SEA Director there was another SEA administrator who gave considerable credibility to community participation: Fred Hayen, Staff Development director for the project and now Director of the Teacher Center, made it clear that parents were not only to be included in planning and participating in staff development projects in all SEA schools, but also that parents could submit proposals for funds to carry out school-related workshops and projects. These two administrators made themselves accessible to people from the community, they shared information and expertise so that parents could participate in new and different areas of school programs. They demonstrated by their actions a new set of assumptions and expectations providing an example for other administrators.

THE BEGINNING OF PARENT COORDINATORS

Because the Community Liaisons were housed in the SEA office, if one particular school program desired or needed from the beginning a high level of community participation at the building level,

that had to be the responsibility of someone other than the Community Liaison.

In the process of designing the Marcy Open School program, parents had been heavily involved. Much of what was written about the kind of open school Marcy might be implied parent participation of a type and level which, based on history and experience, was not going to happen all by itself. Someone suggested to the Marcy principal that there be a half-time position created to establish and maintain open channels of communication between parents and the new Open School, to work with parents and staff in designing processes for working together in decision-making and in the implementation of the program, and to initiate and coordinate a volunteer program for the school. The parent coordinator position established in September, 1971 was advertised among Marcy parents and a joint staff/parent selection committee hired Judy Farmer, a Marcy parent.

THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATOR APPEARS

After two years of the SEA project, the SEA Community Liaison positions were phased out, their mission had largely been fulfilled.

In the summer of 1973, at the SEA Director's initiative, the SEA Community Education Coordinator called together the Community Liaisons, the Pratt and Motley Volunteer Coordinators and the Marcy Parent Coordinator as a task force to draw up recommendations relating to community participation and volunteer programs in SEA for the second half of the five year project.

Each of the schools was feeling a need to develop volunteer programs and some wanted to continue at the building level the type of community liaison work which SEA Community Liaisons and the Marcy Parent Coordinator had begun.

In SEA, by the third year, the response to the question of how to bring about the type and the level of community participation each Southeast school felt it wanted was to create in each school a staff position entitled the Community Resource Coordinator (CRC).

Each school wrote its own CRC job description (which is revised each year as the program evolves), decided the amount of time and the salary, and hired the person – all through whatever processes had been developed by that school.

During the summer of 1973, the CRCs went through a two-week training session which laid the foundation not only for new positions in the schools but also for a K-12 Community Resource Team which would coordinate the use of resources throughout the SEA schools. The team would serve as a support group for the CRCs, permit jointly planned in-service programs for SEA staff on the use of resources and for volunteer training, and provide linkage between the CRCs and the Community Education programs in Southeast. This CRC team also hired an SEA Community Resource Coordinator to assist in its SEA-wide efforts, such as recruiting screening and referring to appropriate schools the university and college volunteers, working with the universities in fostering the concept of giving college credit for volunteer experiences in the schools, organizing workshops, working with city-wide volunteer agencies on behalf of all SEA schools.

The CRC Team wrote a SEA Volunteer Handbook which was distributed house-to-house in Southeast and placed in neighborhood businesses and it drew up a Southeast Field Trip List.

Although their jobs vary from school to school, some aspects are common to all of the CRC positions and are very important to all SEA Community Resource Coodinators.

THE ROLE OF A CRC

All of the Community Resource Coordinators are involved with helping people inside the school and people outside the school communicate frequently and easily with each other in mutually understandable language.

This may mean writing or reviewing with the school principal the materials sent home on Wednesdays from each elementary school to avoid that we (in school)/they (out of school) dichotomy which seems patronizing to parents or to translate bureaucratic or educational jargon into plain English, an exercise healthy for both the writer and the audience. It often means hours of telephone conversations with parents or speaking frankly at staff meetings to increase awareness among each group that all of these individuals are people, rather than faceless players of the roles of "teacher," "principal" or "parent." It may mean clarifying different viewpoints or opinions in joint parent/staff meetings.

It is vital that the Community Resource Coordinators know the parents, the community and the school staff extremely well and that they earn credibility with people in all those groups. Although the SEA Community Resource Coordinators live in the community and three of them are SEA parents, their role is not that of the token hired parent in the school – they are not parent advocates for every issue nor are they staff apologists.

Rather, they see themselves and are seen as change agents who must try to be honest, sensitive, knowledgable and skilled professionals in a profession they learned more by seat-of-the-pants experience than by the book.

All the Community Resource Coordinators'

job descriptions include as a large part of their responsibility the coordination of their community's resources in the school programs. In each school this person is responsible for building, maintaining and coordinating a volunteer program appropriate for the needs of that particular alternative. These programs enrich, enhance and extend the curriculum, the total learning environment – they do not replace staff members.

The CRC is responsible for all phases of the school's volunteer program: searching and finding people, interviewing them to determine their interests and capabilities, deciding which tasks or which teacher they might best suit, providing training if they need it, seeing and talking with them if they miss a session at school to let them know the students and the teacher missed them, discussing problems if they arise and being sure they know that they are appreciated and their work is valuable.

Volunteering is a two-way proposition from which both the school and the volunteer must feel a net gain. Satisfaction of both parties depends substantially on knowing the teaching styles and personalities of staff members, being in touch with curriculum, knowing about individual needs of students, materials which need to be produced, secretaries who are overloaded and need assistance, as well as personally assessing the volunteer's strengths, talents, skills, needs for training, motivation and personality in order to work out effective placements of volunteers.

Throughout SEA, Community Resource Coordinators have, on a one-to-one basis or as leaders of in-service sessions, assisted school personnel in developing skills which are needed to work successfully and effectively with volunteers, such as managing additional adults in the classroom, planning the tasks expected of a volunteer and communicating with volunteers as valid members of an educational team.

Gradually, over the course of the last four years, SEA staff members, students and volunteers have grown to know each other well as working partners in a common venture, establishing a level of trust and comfort which makes the school a place in which people feel a sense of caring and belonging. There are still differences of opinion, division over issues but more often they are differences among people, and the label one wears is much less important than before.

DEVELOPMENT OF EACH SCHOOL'S PROGRAM

In tracing the development of the Community Resource program at Tuttle School, Evelyn Czaia points to September 1973 as a turning point. Up to that time, Evelyn had been the SEA Community Liaison for the Tuttle community, concentrating on communication and information to and from her neighborhood. The school's use of volunteers consisted of an occasional WISE tutor and a few parents who assisted in the Reading Center. That did not mean Tuttle's parents were not interested or devoted – through the P.T.A. they sought and received much information and kept abreast of the developing contemporary program. The design of program did not dictate that large numbers of in-school volunteers were vital, nor was the community as interested as at some other SEA schools to become involved in the "professionals" turf. However, as federal funds declined, the need for volunteers grew, and in September of that third year of SEA, the Community Liaison position was expanded to include development and responsibility for a volunteer program and the title changed to Community Resource Coordinator.

Bruce Graff, Tuttle's Community Education Coordinator, and Evelyn Czaia worked with a group of parents and volunteers to plan the volunteer program. The telephone, weekly fliers, Tuesday morning Coffee and Conversation with child care provided by older elementary students are all used to communicate needs and information to increase participation by parents.

Since then many people have contributed their talents to enrich the contemporary school program – people like Chris Sturtz, the university student who taught German for one hour, three days a week for two years to 4th graders and took them to The Black Forest Inn for a German lunch and to the town of New Ulm for a day in a community with strong Germanic roots; Lois Skinner, a parent who began as a volunteer and then was hired as a school aide; Kathy Vigoren and Sara Griffith, parents who received twelve hours of university training to prepare themselves as tutors; Elsie Arnsdorf, a senior citizen in her third year as a Tuttle volunteer.

Tuttle students have also explored and learned in the community. For instance, Yvonne Bessler, 6th grade teacher at Tuttle, designed a successful project last year which involved all of her students visiting places of work and finding out about occupations of some of the parents; Tuttle's Human Relations program included mixed-age groups of 9-10 children going on forrays into the community with a Tuttle staff member, parent, or with SEA personnel (SEA Director Jim Kent bicycled with some students to the Como Zoo); Ms. Jan Bernstrom took her 4th graders camping.

Tuttle's volunteers for the week of February 10-14, 1975 numbered 25 and their school-day efforts totaled 66 hours of assistance. The areas in which most Tuttle volunteers work are in classroom assistance; tutoring, producing materials and clerical assistance. At Tuttle, the Community

Education program is very closely intertwined with the CRC program. (See Community Education section.)

The Continuous Progress program at Pratt and Motley schools predated SEA by a year. There were volunteer tutors and library assistants at the two schools, but as the program matured and Friday free choice hour for primary children at Pratt and afternoon mini-courses for intermediate students at Motley expanded, the need for volunteers increased. In the fall of 1971 Marie Brandt agreed to fill a new P.T.A. Board position as volunteer coordinator, but she soon found this an overwhelming assignment and recommended that it become a paid position. With the expanded program the interest group options from which students chose each two weeks include such subjects as mountain climbing, anatomy, chess, bicycle safety, photography, pottery, auto harp, gardening and camping in addition to extended opportunities for academic skill building. Some interest groups, like Bev Mercil's Scandinavian cooking were offered in the volunteer's home. In the spring of 1974, the intermediate program at Motley moved into the Pratt building with the primary program. The Pratt program continues to be the largest elementary alternative in SEA. The part-time CRC position, currently held by Jere Purple, is primarily a volunteer coordinator position with the largest numbers of volunteers involved in teaching each afternoon for approximately two weeks at a time.

During the week of February 10-14, 1975, a total of 51 volunteers logged 160 hours at Pratt.

At the Southeast Free School, Sally French began her SEA career as the Community Liaison. At that school the job included duties of other Community Liaisons, plus starting, informally, a volunteer program, establishing a newspaper, teaching a class and communicating with the Free School community which, unlike other SEA schools, did not really have a "neighborhood" base. Being the only K-12 school in SEA and also being the smallest program, the Free School has had some rather unique staffing needs. In the summer of 1973, as federal funds began to diminish and more volunteers were needed to continue aspects of the program, and a full-time Community Resource Coordinator position was established. Marion Mowry serves as volunteer coordinator and Community Liaison.

Most foreign language classes at Free School have been taught by volunteers like Jean Hillman who taught Spanish as part of the curriculum required for Free School students participating in the month-long study trip to Mexico one year. Volunteers at Free School supervise resource centers like Pottery and Primary Shop, assist with physical education, tutor, and expand the Free School's ability to meet student interests and needs by teaching a variety of classes to complement the curriculum offered by the paid staff. A Parent/Volunteer Center in the school is available for relaxing and for small skill-building workshops for volunteers. A certified teacher, Marion Mowry, also supervises student teachers at Free School. Monthly Free School pot luck suppers for the whole school, including volunteers, have helped build a feeling of community. Located since spring 1974 in the Motley School building, one block from the University of Minnesota campus, Free School draws a majority of its volunteers from the university and other colleges. During the week of February 10-14, 1975, 45 volunteers worked a total of 154½ hours.

At Marcy the Community Resource program started with the half-time position of parent coordinator when the Open School doors opened in 1971. The first two years the primary thrust was involving parents and staff together in a variety of situations in order to develop a trust and comfort level which would permit them to work constructively together: finding capable volunteers, writing goals for the school, having parents and teachers attending staff meetings together, participating together in open education in-service training.

Old roles had to be redefined, partly by placing people in situations together which were slightly uncomfortable, but where they would get to know each other personally so that the stereotypic roles would disappear. (An example: at a Year One staff meeting discussion of training needs for the staff, a university professor who had a child at Marcy contributed some excellent ideas. After the meeting, one teacher said to another, "Who was that parent?" The other teacher who had known the man as one of her University professors said, "Oh, he isn't a parent, he is a Special Education professor." The Marcy Parent Coordinator said, "He is both.")

About 50% of the 97 volunteers who contributed a total of 273.5 hours at Marcy for the week of February 10-14, 1975 were parents and the other half were college and university students and other community people. For the 1974-75 school year, 72% of Marcy families were involved in the Open School in more than just attending parent meetings – and that year 37% of Marcy's families were single-parent families. There has been a conscious effort to involve fathers in the school, working with children. At first the men were mostly seen when there were meaty or heady issues being discussed, but gradually they were asked to take five students to the museum or go along on a camping trip; then, some were invited to cook at school with children; soon they were in school doing many tasks – 96 fathers were involved with students during 1974-75. (This pattern is similar all over SEA, fortunately for our

students.)

Beginning in September 1973, as the Community Liaison positions phased out, the Marcy Parent Coordinator became a full-time Community Resource Coordinator position. Each year, new parents fill out a parent-designed questionnaire at the New-To-Marcy meeting held the night before school starts, and shortly thereafter they are called to see if they have any time available to help the school. There is always good attendance at that meeting; hence a good return of questionnaires, the information from which is then transferred to cards indicating the skills, talents, interests, occupations, etc., of the new parents. This gives quick access to resources when a need arises in a classroom.

Volunteers at Marcy do a wide variety of things: Nancy Conroy, a parent, drove a group to see a Navajo rug weaving exhibit and on the trip home she and the students decided they would all like to know how to do all the steps in processing wool, from the sheep to the woven product – an interest group that Nancy led as a teacher/co-learner for about three months; Gerry Wahl, a University student began by tutoring two students, then branched into a physiology/dissecting project and during his second year as a two-hours-per-week volunteer, is spending three morning per week as an assistant to the classroom teacher and frequently has students to his house for dinner. Charlie Schlueter, first trumpet in the Minnesota Orchestra and a Marcy father, has come in to do "one-shot" demonstrations of different kinds of horns; two parents, Ella Ausland and Ann Blochowiak did not miss one Thursday last year counting the school's lunch money, thus freeing a school aide from that job to work in the classroom.

Marcy has another dimension of community programming which is unique at the elementary school level. It is an interest "Center" called "Other People . . . Other Places" which grew out of a program called Community Day.

In the "Center" children focus an interest, and then make the actual arrangements – telephone a bike shop to arrange an apprenticeship for a couple of months, make necessary calls for a large group field trip to a museum, including a call to get a school bus for transportation and parents to accompany them.

Marshall-University Jr.-Sr. High School's first Community Resource Coordinators were Nadine Borchardt (for junior high) and Iris Kangas (for senior high) who began in September 1973. The following year these positions were combined into one half-time position. The position differed from those of elementary school counterparts in significant ways: The CRC was responsible for volunteer programs for the entire junior/senior high school, but was not involved in increasing parent participation in other aspects of the school; developing a volunteer program at the secondary level presents very different problems than at the elementary level. Parents are more willing to leave the school programs up to the professionals to operate (in other words, their participation tends to be either supportive through channels like the P.T.S.A. or sporadic – they mobilize when there is an issue or crisis).

Projects which take students into the community fall more into the category of special programs directed by teaching staff such as O.C.L.E.

(Off-Campus Learning Experiences), Deliberate Psychological Education, and A Wilderness and Research Experience.

WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Records are kept in all Southeast schools. Each year for one week an SEA-wide log is taken of all volunteers, their tasks, hours and the source from which they were recruited. The tallied results of this log are presented to the Southeast Council and are sent to the Board of Education. They show clearly that from an economic standpoint alone, quality and numbers of volunteers brought into a school program more than compensate for the dollars used for a coordinator.

The SEA Community Resource Coordinators agree that it is unrealistic to think that the jobs they fill could be accomplished on a non-paid volunteer basis.

If a school needs and wants the services a CRC provides, there must be an economic commitment. They also feel that the job requires skills and knowledge which take time to develop and which give the position a professional status.

Although all the SEA Community Resource Coordinator positions were originally funded with federal monies and are still largely dependent on these, some local school funds and the Teacher Center funds have been committed.

Each school in Southeast Alternatives has listed Community Resource Coordinator positions as high priority for local funding – as necessary for alternative schools, whether those be contemporary, continuous progress, open, free or some others not included in SEA.

As individuals and as a team, the SEA Community Resource Coordinators have had an impact on the Minneapolis school system. Marcy parents mobilized support for Bryn Mawr Open School and then that school's Resource Coordinator interned at Marcy. Assistance has been given other new alternative schools for volunteer programs. The Citizens Accountability Project to the Minneapolis School Board included a recommendation for provisions for a paid CRC for schools needing and wanting more community participation than can come about on a strictly volunteer or P.T.A. basis.

The SEA Community Resource Team contacted other schools in the city to form a group for those persons working with schools and communities. The group put on a city-wide workshop last year and spoke with administrators from the Minneapolis system, including the Superintendent of Schools. The Team also requested that SEA Internal Evaluation do a study of volunteer, staff, administrator satisfaction with the SEA volunteer programs – a study which gave the program high marks.

Visitors from across the nation are impressed and eager to learn how SEA has brought about the level of community involvement and commitment.

The Minneapolis School Board and the school administration have made a verbal commitment to community participation and they have resolved to have alternative schools city-wide at the elementary level by September 1976.

The major question remains whether they are willing to think creatively about how to commit local funds or seek private or federal funding to create a new kind of public school position which we now know can build substantial community participation necessary, especially in alternative schools, or whether they will merely pay lip service to the idea.

With a school board election coming, a new Superintendent unidentified at this point, declining enrollments and consequent budget and staffing problems, the future is very unclear. However, in SEA we now know that volunteer programs have been tremendously exciting and beneficial for our students.

Judy Farmer taught Jr. and Sr. high social studies in Massachusetts and Taiwan. While in Taiwan, she directed the East/West Center for Technical and Educational Exchange through the University of Hawaii. Prior to her SEA involvement she directed the SE Coop Nursery School for two years.

Discerning SEA... A Secondary Student's View

By Kerstin Gorham

" . . . Southeast Alternatives is providing many new and worthwhile options which should be opened to a wider range of students."

The Southeast Alternatives program was begun in Minneapolis four years ago. Last fall, 1974, I became involved in SEA governance. Although I had taken advantage of the many new elective classes at Marshall U High, I didn't know much about the purpose of SEA, or the changes it had brought about, until I became one of the student representatives on the Southeast Council, a group set up to monitor and evaluate the SEA program.

In the winter I also took AWARE (A Wilderness and Research Experience), a special program at Marshall which was funded with SEA federal money, and in the spring I volunteered as a morning aide in Mrs. Hanson's class at Pratt Continuous Progress Elementary School.

These three activities have given me a much better idea of what SEA is all about. I will write about what I learned and my general feelings on the value of continuing the changes brought about by SEA.

When I began as a member of the Southeast Council I felt very much overwhelmed and discouraged by the large amounts of paper given to us to master before and during each meeting. The meetings went very slowly, and at each one the agenda covered many programs that were unfamiliar to a newcomer.

In addition to that, the members had the usual problem of serving on the council as an activity outside of their normal workload, and didn't have as much time to spend as S.E. Council responsibilities really required.

Another problem I faced, as a representative of the Marshall U. Senate, was lack of participation in the Senate by its members. Therefore my main role was to inform the Senate about what the Southeast Council was doing, instead of trying to pursue goals given to me by the Senate.

As time went on however, my impression of the Council became more favorable. The members were all very friendly, enthusiastic about their work and the SEA program, and helpful to me. They were most willing to explain to me any issues or programs I didn't know about, or understand very well.

The members of the Council came from all segments of the community: teachers, administrators, parents, students, community and project members.

It was therefore a very good example of participatory democracy.

The Council also seemed to deal with most issues eventually. The main issue this year, it seemed to me, was the decision concerning which Area the SEA program should join next year. The recommendation that SEA should join the West Area came after thorough investigation, and seems to me to be a very promising decision.

The other issue which affected Marshall a great deal was the decision to have an Open School for the ninth through twelfth grade next year. I learned a lot about that at the Council meetings, and changed my mind in favor of the program, which now seems to me to be very exciting, and likely to help many students who are not much interested in the regular school program.

Photo by Joan Williamson

Many other subsidiary issues seemed to be well handled, though I wasn't fully aware of what many issues were about, and therefore didn't participate much in discussion of them.

I think the Southeast Council accomplished a lot this year, and helped to make many positive changes in the educational system. I hope that a committee with that kind of representation will continue to monitor and evaluate the school system in the future.

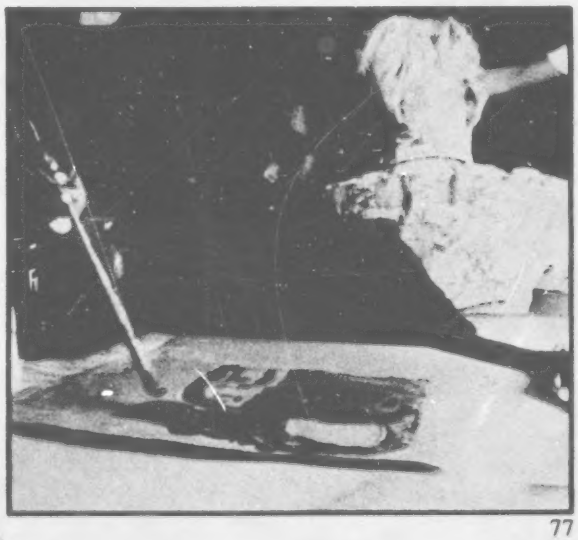
It is valuable to have students on the Council, even though they may not participate a great deal (or have time to read all those stacks of paper). For myself I learned a lot about what SEA has tried to do, the changing goals of the educational process, and just how a committee gets things done.

Taking AWARE winter quarter was another very valuable experience. AWARE is a program that lasts a full day, five days a week, for one quarter. My group consisted of ten students, one instructor, and two interns from the University of Minnesota.

The main purpose of the course is to provide a relaxed environment in which students can learn about subjects they are personally interested in, and become aware of environmental and social problems the world is facing.

The major problem of AWARE was a reduction in funding. The program previously had had a thousand dollars to spend and three teachers each quarter. Each year the federal grant has been less, and has led to less travel, fewer speakers, and a reduction in the number of instructors.

In the class I met many kids I would normally never meet in a regular classroom situation. We were together in a relaxed, non-competitive atmosphere, which made it easier to get to know people.



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At the beginning of the quarter everyone wondered how they could possibly get along with people so different from themselves, but I think we all learned that different people can communicate, and can like each other, if the opportunity is there.

The most exciting time was going up to Itasca Biology Station for a week, which made a complete change from the normal school environment. It led us to appreciate the value of wilderness, and we all grew much closer to each other. The lack of pressure and everyday duties helped us to think more deeply about things that concerned us, and to have fun doing things together. One thing the experience gave me was a sense of belonging, of being accepted as a member of a group, no better or worse than anyone else. We equally shared responsibility, according to what each of us could do.

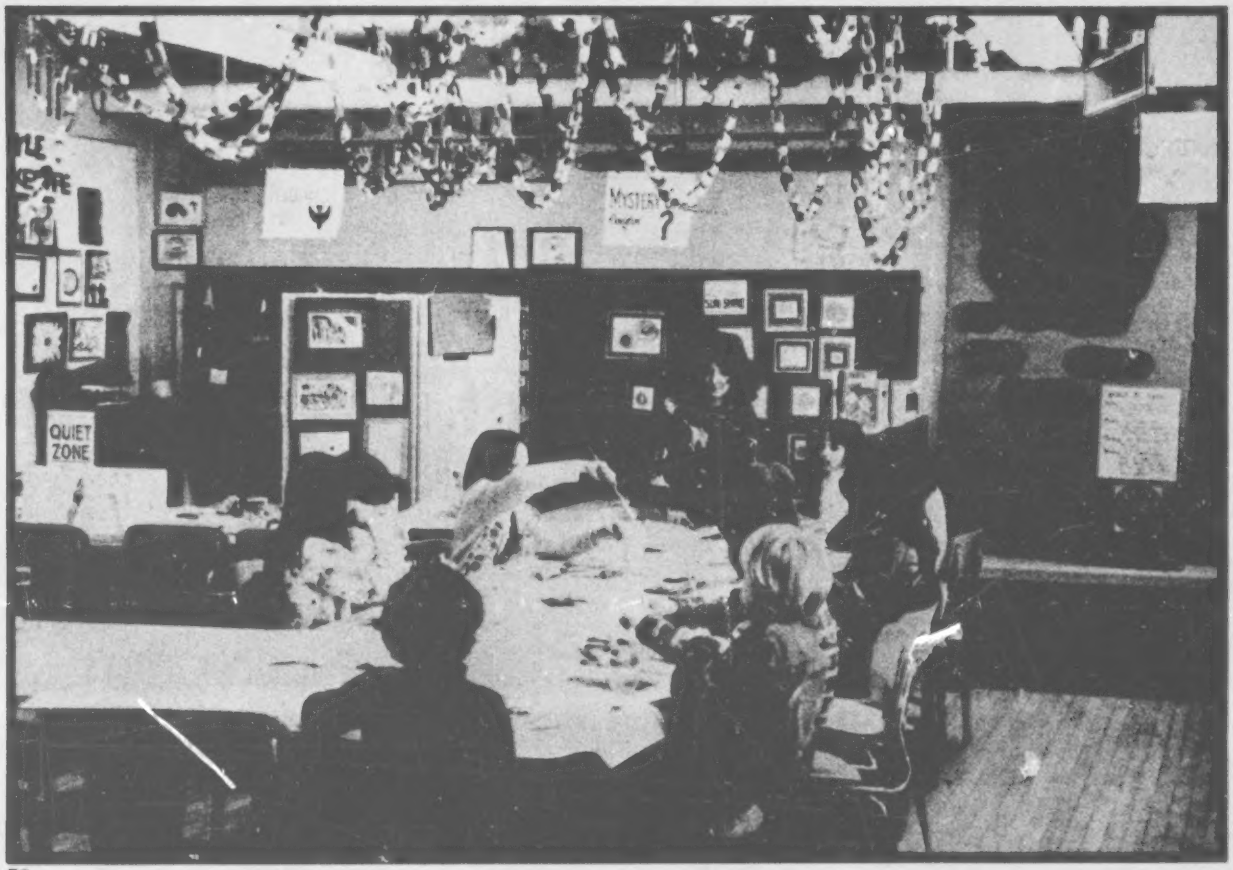
That feeling was somewhat lost back at Marshall. My mind however was opened to many new things: eastern religious philosophies, current environmental issues, nutrition, the Peace Corps., roller skating, and much more. I am very glad I got to know the teachers and the students in AWARE. They all taught me a lot, and are very special to me. In particular, Bob Waggoner is a first-rate teacher, as well as a friend, of the AWARE students.

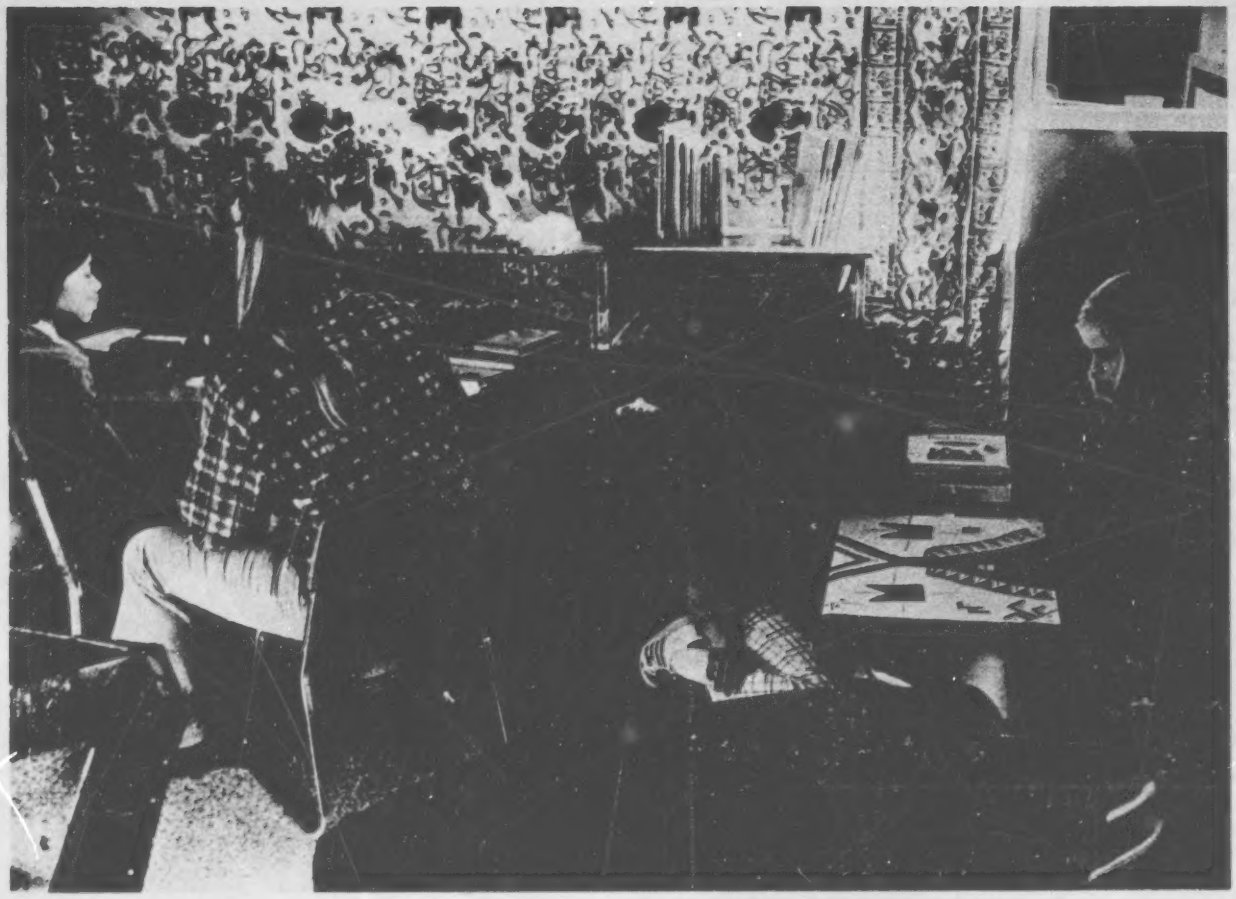
I hope AWARE can continue in the future, opened up to all the city high schools. It needs money, but is a wonderful experience for many different kinds of students, whether they get along in a regular high school or not. It can teach you tolerance and concern for many different kinds of people, views, and philosophies.

During the past two and a half months I've volunteered as a morning aide in the continuous progress school at Pratt. I worked in Mrs. Delores Hanson's room. I went to Pratt when I was in grade school, before SEA began.

The concept of continuous progress, of children working at their own pace, seems to work well, especially for kids who are self-motivated. As far as I could tell most of the children seemed to be getting on well, and they enjoyed school, which I think is an important part of the learning process.

The halls and classrooms were artistically decorated with children's work, and the atmosphere was lively and cheerful. Many modern facilities were in evidence, such as carpeting, audio-visual equipment, the art materials in Heartland, and the woodworking equipment, to name just a few. There seemed a great variety of activities avail-





able to the children.

I had a wonderful time working in Mrs. Hanson's class. The teacher and the students welcomed and accepted me right away. The atmosphere of the class was a very happy one. I think most of the children enjoyed school, and felt that they belonged. It was easy to see that the teacher and the students liked each other very much.

I think that the children in that particular classroom must have become a lot more mature in handling their emotions. The teacher really helped them feel good about themselves, and also helped them to relate to one another. I myself benefited greatly from being a part of this experience.

In conclusion, these three experiences in Southeast Alternatives have led me to believe that the project is providing many new and worthwhile options in education, which should be opened to a wider range of students in the Minneapolis schools. However, it is obvious that lack of funds for SEA may cripple the program for valuable teachers and courses are being lost. This trend is most unfortunate, and every effort should be made to reverse it.

Kerstin Gorham is a recent graduate of Marshall-University High School who now attends Radcliffe College in Massachusetts.

Southeast Alternatives: A View From the Kitchen

By Cynthia A. Cone

"The opportunity to experience a variety of institutional structures may teach students something of greater significance than many classroom lessons . . ."

I'm sitting in the kitchen. It's spring. The bridalwreath is blooming outside the window and Peter is going to graduate from high school today. I have four children, three boys, Peter, Richard, and Robin Kelsey, aged eighteen, sixteen and thirteen, and one girl, Emily Cone Miller, age three. The boys are all in Southeast Alternative schools and Emily goes to nursery school. I'm not always in the kitchen, though it's one of my favorite places, for I teach anthropology at a liberal arts college. At this moment classes are over for the spring and today is a day for contemplation. I worry about the state of the planet and I worry about the future of my children, their children, and yours, and wonder how we can best prepare them for it. My vocation provides me with the license to take a broad view of the situation.

Every social system places special demands on the people who are a part of them. Industrialized societies require an enormous amount of flexibility from their members. Not only do such societies demand a wide range of roles and skills, but these roles and skills fluctuate rapidly over time and space. At best, individuals have to be prepared at any time in their lives for geographical mobility and the acquisition of new skills or new jobs; at worst for unemployment, and ultimately for retirement. Each of these changes is accompanied by confrontation with new sets of values and responsibilities (or lack of them!), new sets of people and new definitions of oneself. Fluctating alternatives present difficult challenges. Someone may train for one slot in the system only to find the slot has disappeared.

The context in which one functions may change radically even to the extent that a role which seemed responsible and consistent with one's own set of values may, in time, begin to conflict with those values and appear unethical or even totally immoral. Consider, for instance, the career officer whose adult life bridges World War II and the war in Vietnam.

The requirements of some roles are so specialized and the demands so intense that they may be difficult to sustain for an entire lifetime. The costs are great – in psychological or physical health, and quite possibly in the rejection of one's lifesyle by one's own children. This is a predicament in which many of us in the middle class find ourselves.

Perhaps, more than anything else in this time of crisis, of deteriorating environments and increasing alienation, we need people who have learned to sustain themselves in differing contexts. Most importantly we need people who can do so with a firm sense of who they are and a clear vision of the kind of society they want to live in. But we don't want to specify the "who's" and the "visions" in advance. In evolutionary perspective the species most likely to survive environmental changes are the ones that encompass great variety among their individual members. An educational system that attempts to turn out carbon copies dooms us to the fate of the dinosaurs.

"Southeast Alternatives recognized the need for diversity, for a mosiac of different kinds of people . . ."

It seems to me, in my view from the kitchen window, that the Southeast Alternative program meets these needs in a couple of important ways. It recognizes the need for diversity, the need for a mosiac of different kinds of people rather than a melting pot where everyone emerges from the same mold. It also provides students with a range of contexts in which they can begin to cope with vareties of institutions and lifestyles, to feel confident that they can handle fluctuating circumstances and alternative points of view without losing sight of their own integrity as individuals. My children, even in their present state of confusions and confidences, have clearly benefited from these two aspects of the Southeast Alternative Program.

1971 – The sun rises on Southeast Alternatives.

Robin, feeling hemmed in by the strict scheduling and regimentation of the pre-SEA Tuttle School, found the decision to go to the Free School an easy one. So did two of his close friends. He has always been an earnest student. (When asked by his first grade teacher to keep a file of new words for an individualized spelling test, Robin's first entry was 'rhododendron.') In Free School he gloried in his new freedom and spent much of his time ebulliantly cementing relationships with his friends. By the end of his second year he became worried that he might be academically behind, and began to long for the security of knowing where "he was at." He elected to sacrifice the freedom of Free School for a more structured existence, and decided to attend Marshall for junior high. Much to his pleasure and surprise, he found he was not behind the "straight schoolers" at all, but ahead. He is now in the ungraded core program at Marshall.

Robin is content to put up with the rigidities of a more traditional program because he has tried "other pastures" and knows which set of limitations and advantages best meet his needs. Free School gave him the opportunity to develop social skills and the awareness that he prefers working in more defined circumstances, where the beginnings and ends of tasks and time periods are carefully delineated. Knowing this he can accept accompanying restrictions, requirements and scheduling conflicts, with more equinimity. Free School also gave him a taste of alternative points of view, an awareness that what one is taught in school may be only one perspective of a multifaceted problem. Authorities must be questioned. "The one thing I like about Free School," Robin once said, "is that in regular school we learned that Congress has the power to declare war. In Free School we learned that Congress never declared the war in Viet Nam."

1972

Richard is a quiet, contemplative intellectual person, who as a child often found Lewis Carroll's Alice a more rewarding companion than living and breathing sorts. In his first year at Marshall he became impatient with the frivolity of other students, frustrated with much of what he perceived as busy work, and unhappy he had so little opportunity to get to know his teachers. After observing Robin's year at Free School he decided to transfer there as well. Richard thrived on the freedom to work according to his own initiative. He appreciated the chance to become close to several of his teachers, but within two years he also became dissatisfied. Richard wanted more challenging academic work and was disenchanted with what he calls "Free School's political environment." The counselor at Free School was enormously helpful. To meet the first need he began to sit in on math and physics courses at the University of Minnesota. When he became confident he could do well in University classes, she assisted Richard in applying to the University without Walls High School Program. He was accepted and as a junior in high school he is now in his fourth quarter of calculus and has credits in economics, political science and German. His greatest problem, as he sees it, is that he is involved in three institutions but truly part of none. He checks in at Free School once in awhile, takes one math course at Marshall "so I can talk to

some people" – and plays elaborate strategy games twice a week with a club at the University of Minnesota. He's three places and no place, and though that is uncomfortable, the academic challenges he accrues thereby are more valuable to him than "social security." Richard continues to be dismayed by the political environment at Free School for its one-sidedness, the negative attitude toward the United States' government and the idolization of China. He wants to be presented with more sides to the picture. "What Free School is doing wouldn't be half possible in China," but then, he concedes, "what I'm doing wouldn't be possible without Free School!"

1974

Robin found the political views at Free School stimulating, Richard found them too narrow, and Peter embraced them. Peter had been attending a very rigorous ivy league oriented high school on the east coast where his father lives. He was an excellent student in junior high, but went into a rapid academic decline in senior high. A creative innovative, radical character, Peter found no place there for his seemingly inexhaustible energies or his view of the world. He came to Minneapolis disenchanted with himself and everybody else. Free School offered a haven. It gave him some room and time to decide what came next. Here is what he has to say about it.

"When I arrived at Free School that fateful autumn morning, I had no idea what went on in an

'alternative' school. My previous public schools were all structured, or at least 'liberally structured,' meaning no study halls, permitted exits off campus, and a wide choice of classes. However these liberals taught history from books written in the 'McCarthy era', literature from the classics and pressured all bright students into taking math, science, and foreign languages until their brains could accept no different ideas, let alone realize that the CIA disrupted foreign governments. Any surprising current events were treated as if they were part of a novel by Dostoyevsky, not some-

thing that could affect their lives.

That first day I received a shock to my classical upbringing. Here were some real people thinking and talking as if the events reported in the Tribune were really important. It was then I realized with a little help from 'comix' provided by the Free School, that whether or not Rockfeller was Vice President was important for my future. The Free School attitude towards the world is one of expanding relevancy, not of classical focus into the past. Civilization is not in need of technological advance, but of cultural applications of forgotten social theories expressed in the same era as the well developed laws of science. I am thankful I had a choice, even if late, between the naive and the enlightened."

In a complex, rapidly changing society such as ours, there is no "right" kind of education, no single ideal. Southeast Alternatives has met many of the needs of Peter, Richard, and Robin as they have perceived them. It has also provided them with opportunities to work within different institutional structures, to learn something not only about institutional limitations, but their own as well. The static ideals of my own education have been replaced by beliefs in relativity and diversity. Such a change promises much for the future. The opportunity to experience a variety of institutional structures may teach students something of greater significance than many of the lessons experienced within the classroom.

During springs to come, when I sit by my kitchen window contemplating Emity's education, I hope that the bright promise of Southeast Alternatives will not have dimmed.

Cynthia Cone is a Southeast parent and on the faculty of Hamline University.

What Kinds of People

By Lee Colby

"I am constantly aware of how important self-esteem is to the process of learning . . ."

As a sometime parent guide at SEA's Open School, I have noticed that visitors' reactions to the school that three of my children have attended are frequently ambivalent.

While the results of Open Education are impressive, the process often seems tumultuous and undefined. Children wander through the building, apparently set up their own lessons, wear crazy clothes, play with animals, sit on the floor, call teachers by their first names.

It's hardly the kind of school environment I was educated in 30 years ago, nor is it exactly typical of public schools today.

On the other hand, I see children reading in all kinds of places, creating original video tape dramas, measuring and computing many different projects, playing very sophisticated computer games, raising money for endangered animal species, and creating original poetry anthologies with confidence and joy.

One visitor expressed his discomfort with a slightly – but politely – hostile question. "What kinds of people are these schools producing?" (It sounded as if the end result of the schooling would be "people" but for now the children were "something else". Or maybe "people" are "adults" but children are "sub people"?)

However slightly and politely it was asked, it was still a good question. The Open School for one is certainly not producing docile, passive, conforming "people" who continue to regard others as authorities and regard themselves as trapped in a system. Obviously, this is something I value as a parent of four children, even though it has meant many changes in my own views of propriety, respect, learning skills, and authority.

What kind of person does an Open School produce? I have seen my 3 Open School children learn some tremendously important things about relating: to themselves, to other people, to academics and to political systems. My fourth child at Marshall-U High has learned some important lessons in relating to self and the effect that academic achievement has on self esteem, and some good lessons in relating to structure and authority.

As a social worker and adult educator, I'm constantly aware of how essential self esteem is to the process of learning. When children and adults feel worthwhile and important, they are able to stretch the boundries of their minds, their environ-

ments, their friendships. The world, or a new idea, is less threatening because they know they are capable and valuable, and even when they are irritable, tired, clumsy, or downright horrible, there is still time and a place for them. That "I can do it" feeling is a direct result of being valued and trusted.

How does the self-esteem business happen, anyway? I thought children felt secure when they had routines, limits, direction from an authority. Well, these are necessary elements in any large social group. But Open Education gives some other dimensions to the traditional security systems. I am sure that giving children the choice, within some limits, of how they are going to spend their time – what projects, what books, where to do "it", what materials, what people – is enormously influential in allowing children the experience of structuring and managing their own lives with some immediate successes. Even at ages 5 and 6!

They also learn from making mistakes that if something didn't go well there will be a next time to do better, or differently.

They learn to plan, develop and evaluate their own performance continually – an executive ability. Coordinating a Community Day outing to Met Stadium, or the Minnesota Legislature, and then reporting to the class on what they learned seems to me to be an extremely sophisticated process of self interest, motivation, planning of information to be acquired, and logistics and evaluation. I was impressed with the end of the year self evaluation of the 3 Open School children, when they reacted to their own work, their own weaknesses, told specifically why they were making these evaluations, and suggested some goals for the next year. Good and bad do not seem to be useful words in these contexts. Different, change, again, more, will try, are words that I hear and read in their evaluations.

The understanding of individuality in Open Education contributes to a child's self esteem. When there is permission to feel blue, or sleepy, or be a "morning person", or a "late" reader, a child can feel accepting of his or her own personhood. Having to conform to a predetermined schedule of acceptable feelings and proper academic procedures is not, I believe, a good way to develop self appreciation. I like it (when I'm not too tired) when my children question established facts and traditions. They feel confident in their own experiences and are willing to risk being wrong or off-base.

I thoroughly enjoy their increasing flexibility and ability to solve their own problems. They see that the school structure can work for them – by setting up the bus transportation for a field trip in creating some short term work experiences with Dinkytown merchants, in developing independent study projects that eventually are evaluated by a teacher. Even the annoying limitations of structure are balanced by the way the children learn to work creatively (not passively) within their boundaries.

The second aspect of my children's learning that I value is the time and energy spent on helping children learn to relate to other people. In an increasingly crowded and pressurized world, interpersonal skills will be essential; and, with its emphasis on the value and integrity of each child, Open Education puts considerable effort into helping children get along honestly with each other. Magic Circles, patient instruction, the honest expression of feelings on the part of teachers and counselors, and some "formal" classes in dealing with conflict are four methods that Marcy has used to develop these skills. In our family, we still resort to fists and feet on occasion, but we also can tell each other how angry or put down we feel. One day my 9 year old son expressed his interest in my work and commented on how much I seemed to like it. Hooray! For a few minutes I was a person, not a Mom.

The emphasis on accepting kids of another race, the other sex, a different generation, or with a handicap has also broadened our lives and given us all a chance to make new kinds of friends.

Another aspect of the children's relationship skills is their willingness and ability to help each other learn. Because there is a value on cooperation and individuality, as well as the fun (not necessity) of learning, kids do a lot of team learning. They don't seem to compete for the highest grades and want to hoard their knowledge until the next test. Rather, there are many projects that require group learning, like the Helping Others Snack Bar, or an astronomy project, or the ubiquitous field trips. Cross-age

tutoring and reading with groups of younger children is a daily example of children sharing their brains.

Once in a while I wonder at the absence of traditional spelling lists, math tests, or Valentine drawings. However, when I see all my children reading almost every night, organizing and producing complicated Muscular Dystrophy carnivals, figuring out mileages or the cost of a week's vacation, or writing reports on birds because it's fun on a Saturday evening, then I know that something is going on with Basic Skills. And when I hear the knowledge they have accumulated about banking, animals, stock and bonds, the cost of "unpolluting" Lucy Wilder Park, the legislative process of the equal athletic opportunity bill sponsored by a friend's mother, I feel even better. These children are relating their academic skills to the world they live in.

Even the municipal government is fair game when kids see a need. One 10 year old boy organized and pushed through a public awareness of the acute need for a stop sign near the school, and it was installed with the help of our responsive alderman. Another group of children negotiated with the Park Board for some trees to plant on Arbor Day. This political consciousness applies to Advisory Council, where 3 groups of children either made proposals for money with accompanying rationales, or contributed some information which helped the Council in its decision making. It is all part of the "I can try anything" philosophy that comes when children are trusted and enjoyed.

I also love their creative projects that spring up like the proverbial mushrooms – the crazy ceramic figures, intricate string pictures, terrariums and especially the careful, expert work that comes out of Hammer Hall. The fact that little children use the power tools without accidents continues to amaze me, but they do! They recognize the limits (strict attention) and follow the discipline of planning, building, and finishing a professional product in an atmosphere of quiet respect of intelligence and machines.

All of these projects take a lot of individual attention. Teachers, aides, volunteers, support staff put tremendous amounts of time and love into helping my (and your) children learn – and enjoy learning. They are supported by an open administration who somehow balances the rigidities of bureaucracy and the changing needs of children.

Of course I wonder, on some long rainy days in April, what kinds of people my children are turning into: noisy, strong minded, territorial. But they are also ingenious, creative, generous, confident, curious, questioning, responsive, sometimes responsible. My guess is that Southeast children will remember their schools as good experiences and will use their process learning, problem solving, relationship skills for their entire lives. I think they will, indeed, be "people".

Of course I have been writing about the response of one family to alternatives. The exciting aspect of having educational options lies in the chance to choose the school that fits the personalities of children and parents. Each school serves different kinds of people and answers different needs, and apparently with equal success according to the yearly testing done by the Evaluation Team. The chance to choose a school, the choice to move to another school as a child's needs change, the dialogue and sharing among the schools are obvious benefits of an alternative system. As a parent, I am delighted that the children and I can choose a school that will serve us and encourage the values that are important to us, and that we can change to another school if we sense a need to grow in another direction.

Lee Colby is a parent of four children in the SEA schools. She served on the Marcy Advisory Council for two years, and helped develop the Community Day Proposal. She also teaches personal awareness classes at the Southeast Community School.

Evaluation Serves Decision Making

By A. Thel Kocher

Mike Hickey (1972) has noted four purposes which evaluation of alternative schools should serve:

> ***First**, and perhaps of highest priority, is the purpose of internal self-improvement for the program, which in turn relates to the ongoing planning process (informal though it may be).*
>
> ***Second**, as a basis for establishing the credibility of the alternative program, evaluation must meet the demands of a variety of "publics" . . . .*
>
> ***Third**, a primary rationale for the existence of alternatives within public education is that they become the means or the process by which public education evolves. Realistically, some strategies for educational alternatives will not work. Evaluation provides a base for identifying those that work and those that don't . . . .*
>
> ***Finally**, the evaluation of student progress is difficult without an adequate understanding of where the program itself stands (p-2).*

The National Institute of Education, apparently recognizing the value of the formative evaluation which Hickey refers to in his first goal, has provided within the Experimental Schools Program a local project evaluation component. According to the NIE this local component

> *provides for a legitimate, internalized role of evaluation, and can be tailored specifically to an individual project and its goals. It should provide for quick feedback and enhance resident and staff participation. It is designed to aid in meeting objectives and improving performance. (Memorandum from R. Binswanger to J. Kent, April 12, 1974).*

In order for the local SEA evaluation component to carry out that charge from the NIE and provide useful feedback to project decision makers, nearly all evaluation activities the component conducts are of a formative nature. Formative evaluation of this type may be characterized as follows:

- its purpose is to improve the program;
- its primary audience is always the program participants – students, parents and school personnel;
- different evaluation situations dictate the conditions of reporting – to whom, report medium, type of recommendations, etc; and
- the evaluators must be responsive to the needs of the program personnel.

Hickey's other three purposes seem to call for the evaluation information to be used in a summative sense. Certainly, these purposes are important, but it is the primary purpose of this article to discuss how the SEA project has implemented a formative effort that provides useful management information to decision makers.

Evaluation and Decision Making

It seems that one of the major reasons many evaluation efforts fail to provide decision makers with the information they need to make education better is the lack of adequate communication and cooperation between evaluators and decision makers.

Much attention has been given to the way evaluators should communicate results to decision

makers but that is not enough. If evaluators are to truly provide decision makers with the information they need, decision makers must be involved at every step of the evaluation process from deciding what questions should be asked to interpreting the results. To accomplish this evaluators must continually communicate their actions and plans to decision makers and solicit their reactions.

To provide for maximum involvement of decision makers in the evaluation process, SEA evaluators believe decision making/evaluation should observe the following process (Rawitsch, 1974):

> Given: We must make a **decision**. To make this decision, we need the answers to certain **questions**. To obtain the answers to these questions, we need certain **information**. To get this information, we need "data" gathering **strategies** (p-4).

Thus, the specific decision to be made provides direction for the evaluation process which consists of the three steps listed. It should be clear that every decision maker evaluates whether formally or informally. That is, anytime a decision is made, questions are formed and answers are sought to these questions by utilizing some strategy to gather information – even if it is a very loose and informal strategy.

When an "evaluator" is called in to help with this process the function is to assist the decision maker(s). The evaluator becomes, in essence, an extension of the decision maker's mental process. The evaluator helps the decision maker(s) by:

- **Delineating** – helping the decision maker determine what questions should be asked and what information is required.
- **Obtaining** – determining what data gathering strategy to use and by using this strategy to collect data. The strategy will sometimes involve the collection of "new" data while at other times it simply requires compilation of data from existing sources.
- **Providing** – by feeding back to the decision maker(s) and helping the decision maker(s) utilize the data to make the necessary judgments.

The decisions to be made, which then give direction to an evaluation effort, may come from many sources and possess varying degrees of explicitness. A few of the major situations which arise are:

- The decision may be a desire to determine whether or not a goal or objective has been achieved.

  It is important to note here that while the product is important, the various SEA components believe that process is more important than product. Thus, many goals within the project are process or environment goals rather than product goals.
- The decision to be made may arise from informal feelings from administrators, parents, evaluators, or other participants that there seems to be a problem. These decisions usually relate back at least partially to one of the component's goals.
- The information gathered for one evaluation effort may seem to point to other areas which should be investigated. Many of the evaluation efforts – or parts of efforts – are primarily exploratory; that is, their purpose is to gather information that evaluators anticipate will be useful in answering later questions or may help locate areas which require more indepth study.

Adoption of an evaluation/decision making model such as the one described can help assure that questions for which evaluators seek answers are questions which are important to decision makers. This, in turn, will significantly affect evaluators' successes in convincing decision makers to utilize evaluation results.

Organizing For Service

Another factor which seems to have contributed greatly to success in allowing SEA decision makers to utilize evaluation results has been the organizational structure of the SEA Internal Evaluation Team. The evaluation efforts conducted by the Team can be from one of two major categories – project-wide and intra-school. Efforts of an intra-school nature are those which deal only with the program in a particular SEA school or with some aspect of the program in that school. Project-wide efforts are those which deal with information pertaining to more than one of the schools in the project or to one of the other SEA components which serve schools; e.g., Teacher Center, Community Resource Coordinators.

Throughout the history of the project, approximately equal numbers of evaluation personnel have been assigned to each of these major categor-

ies. Thus, each school has had an evaluator assigned to provide service to that component. In several instances the evaluator has been assigned only to one particular school and has functioned as a "live-in" evaluator while in other cases the evaluator has been assigned to more than one school, or to a school and to additional project-wide tasks. As the project "winds down," arrangements in which an evaluator has responsibilities in several components are the rule rather than the exception.

SEA evaluation personnel, whether they are assigned to work within one of the SEA schools or out of the SEA office on efforts of a project-wide nature, are responsible to the SEA Evaluation Manager rather than to the school principal. This type of reporting structure has allowed individual evaluators to remain relatively free of politics which sometimes enter into the design, conduct or reporting of an evaluation effort. Although the need has rarely arisen, this arrangement has allowed the evaluation manager to "play the heavy" in making decrees with regard to evaluation efforts and has thus reduced possible negative reflections upon the credibility of individual evaluators.

The arrangement has also provided a subtle safeguard which may be at least partly responsible for the success of SEA evaluators in avoiding heavy involvement in tasks that are more implementation than evaluation. It would also seem that this organizational reporting structure along with the quality of the members of the Team has helped intra-school evaluators avoid bias.

> ". . . relationships have enhanced meaningful use of evaluation information . . ."

The relationships evaluators have developed with the staff members appear to have greatly enhanced meaningful use of evaluation information.

This has apparently been true not just for information produced by the evaluator assigned to the program, but also to project-wide information produced by other evaluators. The assignment of some evaluation personnel working in buildings while others are working directly out of the SEA evaluation office seemingly has allowed those evaluators assigned to the buildings to become a separate group in the eyes of most SEA personnel.

The evaluator's credibility can have a beneficial effect on how the school staff utilizes evaluation information. However, on the occasional instances in which project-wide reports have not been thought by people in schools to have been worth the effort, building evaluators have been able to

maintain a degree of disassociation with the report, allowing them to avoid a loss of credibility. They can, in effect, "have their cake and eat it too."

To provide additional understanding of how the Team operates, it is perhaps instructional to consider the types of evaluation efforts undertaken. The tasks can be considered in two major groupings – project-wide and intra-school.

Two major classes of evaluation service have dominated the Team's project-wide efforts over the years. One of these, Characteristics and Movement Studies, has attempted to determine what kind of students attend each of the SEA elementary programs, where they come from and why they chose the program they did. The characteristics examined were: age, sex, absence rate, parent's occupations and number of parents in the home.

A second major class of project-wide evaluation efforts has been aimed at helping decision makers know how various groups feel about the project. As part of this effort, a parent survey has been conducted each year of the project, staff surveys have been conducted during the last two years, and a random sample of elementary students were interviewed during the third year of the project. These surveys have concentrated mainly on asking the respondents how satisfied they are with various aspects of the project, how they feel about various educational philosophy and/or organization oriented issues and how they feel about issues upon which it is believed decisions will have to be made in the future.

Other project-wide efforts have included evaluations of the SEA Director, the Teacher Center, the volunteer programs, social work services, the Tuesday released time and Human Relations programs and a study of how parent/staff groups have participated in project governance.

In fulfilling many of the information needs of school decision makers the intra-school evaluation efforts undertaken by the Evaluation Team have covered a wide variety of tasks. These have included, among others, evaluations of specific programs at various schools (e.g., reading or math programs), evaluations of use of space and time in less structured schools, and how students interact with other students and with adults.

As with some project-wide efforts, some intra-school activities have been aimed at determining why parents/students chose a particular program, who made the choice and how satisfied they are with the program. In providing all of the intra-school information, evaluators have relied heavily on observations, interviews and questionnaires coupled with some use of formal test instruments, whether norm or criterion-referenced.

Each year as the evaluation plans are designed, the intra-school evaluators have some time allocated specifically to respond to evaluation requests that may arise during the year. These requests may come from decision making groups or individual teachers, administrators, parents or students. In this way evaluators are often able to provide quick feedback on a matter of concern. Often times the problems raised and the information gathered may seem simple, but usually the multitudinous demands on the time and attention of others in the building prevent them from effecting the study themselves. Many times, too, these participants are too close to the problem and the evaluator is able to take a fresh objective look at the situation.

The SEA evaluation staff has also provided personnel support and/or financial assistance to many SEA schools as they developed criterion-referenced tests and skills recording charts or grids. While summarization of data from some of these has, in some instances, been used as part of program evaluation efforts, their major purpose has been to assist school personnel as they work with individual students and as an aid in reporting to parents.

The following documents/articles which have been produced by internal evaluators should also be helpful to those who wish a deeper understanding of the evaluation process as it operates in SEA.

Demet, Susan (Ed.) ***SEA internal evaluation plan****: 1974-75. Minneapolis: Southeast Alternatives, 1974.*

Aldrich, R. A. (now Olson) "Marcy Open School: Feeding back to decision makers." ***Testing and Evaluation: New Views****, Association for Childhood International, 1975, pp. 49-52.*

Kocher, A.T. ***Formative evaluation of alternative schools****. Minneapolis: Southeast Alternatives, 1975.*

Summary

This article has discussed what seems to have been two crucial elements contributing to the success of formative evaluation in the SEA project. The first of these is an evaluation/decision making model which allows for maximum involvement of decision makers in the evaluation process. Secondly, an organizational structure which allows evaluators to provide effective service was outlined. Finally, in order to provide additional understanding of how the SEA Internal Evaluation Team operates, the paper discussed the types of evaluation efforts which have been conducted in SEA.

In addition to the adoption of an appropriate evaluation/decision making model and an appropriate organizational structure, SEA evaluators also believe that to provide effective formative evaluation information, evaluators must break away from the classic research oriented paradigm that has so often been adopted for evaluation studies.

The purpose of research is to produce new knowledge that is generalizable, whereas the purpose of evaluation is to delineate, obtain and provide information for decision making. These two purposes call for different methods and techniques if each is to be properly served. For additional information about these important differences the reader is referred to:

Kocher, A. T. ***Formative evaluation of alternative schools****. Minneapolis: Southeast Alternatives.*

Patton, M. Q. ***Alternative evaluation Research Paradigm****. Grand Forks, N.D.: North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation.*

Rosen, D. "New evaluation for new Schools." ***Changing Schools****, 1973, (9), 3-15.*

Stufflebeam, D. L., Foley, W. J., Gephart, W. J., Guba, E. G., Hammond, R. L., Merriman, H. O. & Provos, M. M. ***Educational evaluation and decision making****. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa, 1971.*

Currently SEA evaluation manager, Dr. Kocher was a secondary mathematics educator for six years. His recent graduate training and work experiences have focused on educational research, measurement and evaluation.

SEA: Some Selected Results

By A. Thel Kocher

"The primary purpose of SEA Internal Evaluation is to provide feedback to project decision makers . . ."

The SEA project has been in existence for over four years. Certainly, it is fair to inquire what effect the project has had on its constituents – the students, parents and staff who are involved. The project and its individual components have many goals and objectives – some explicit and others only implicit. It is not possible in an article such as this to systematically consider every goal. Consequently, the purpose of this article is to examine some of the data which exist and which can shed some light upon the effects of the massive SEA undertaking.

The article provides information about SEA's progress in three areas closely related to major projectwide goals, and attempts to answer to the following three questions.

- Have SEA patrons availed themselves of the opportunity to choose among various programs and what effect has this had on the characteristics of the student body in each program?
- How successful has SEA been in providing programs which meet the educational needs of its clients?
- Has SEA succeeded in providing for decentralization of governance and decision making?

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT POPULATION

One of the SEA goals is to establish a variety of educational programs and to allow parents and students the opportunity to choose among these options. What happens when this element of choice is provided? Do people really avail themselves of the opportunity? Do some schools become homogeneous with respect to some particular characteristic? Data exists which provides at least partial answers to these questions.

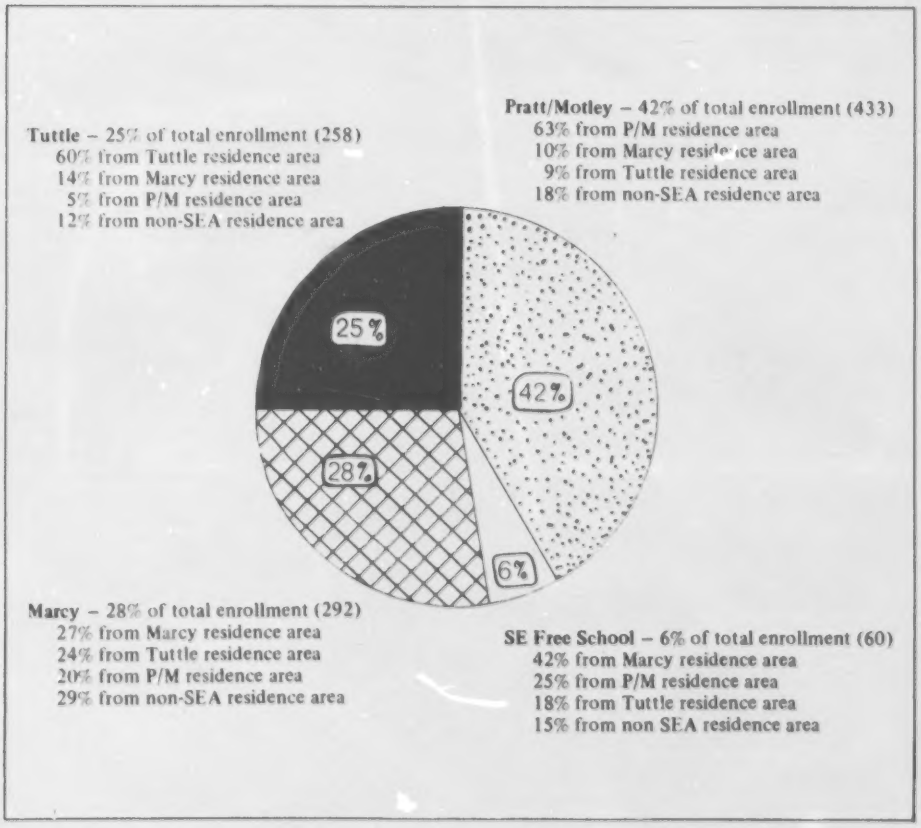
Exercise of Choice

Information which is available indicates that SEA parents and students have, indeed, availed themselves of the opportunity to choose among various programs. On the last day of school, 1974, there were 1,043 elementary students enrolled in SEA programs. Of these, 20% were students who did not live in the Southeast area. Another 27% were students whose residences were in the Southeast area but who were attending an SEA school other than their "neighborhood" school. Thus, almost half (47%) of the SEA elementary children were attending a "non-neighborhood" school.

Additional evidence indicates that it would be wrong to assume that a large proportion of the remaining 53% are attending a school simply because it is closest to their residence. This information indicates that these programs are predominately chosen because of philosophy, staff, and a myriad of other reasons.

This 47% attending "non-neighborhood" schools is almost double the corresponding figure of 28% in Year 1 of SEA (1971-72). Furthermore, only 3% of these Year 1 "non-neighborhood" children came from residences outside Southeast. The climb to the corresponding 20% at the end of Year 3 represents an almost seven-fold increase.

This chart which follows indicates the residence area composition of each elementary program's student body on the last day of school in Year 3 of SEA (June 1974).


Tuttle – 25% of total enrollment (258)
60% from Tuttle residence area
14% from Marcy residence area
5% from P/M residence area
12% from non-SEA residence area
Pratt/Motley – 42% of total enrollment (433)
63% from P/M residence area
10% from Marcy residence area
9% from Tuttle residence area
18% from non-SEA residence area
25%
42%
28%
6%
Marcy – 28% of total enrollment (292)
27% from Marcy residence area
24% from Tuttle residence area
20% from P/M residence area
29% from non-SEA residence area
SE Free School – 6% of total enrollment (60)
42% from Marcy residence area
25% from P/M residence area
18% from Tuttle residence area
15% from non SEA residence area

Racial/Ethnic Composition

One of the implicit goals of the SEA project was to increase the diversity of students in the various SEA schools and to facilitate desegregation/integration in the schools located in the Southeast area. Data available from the Minneapolis Schools Pupil Sight Count reports of 1971-72, 1972-73, 1973-74, and 1974-75 indicates that overall minority enrollment in SEA elementary programs has increased from 10% in the first year of the project (1971-72) to 21% in the fourth year (1974-75). Corresponding figures for the total Minneapolis Public Schools elementary programs are 17% and 22% respectively. Thus, over the four years of the project total minority enrollment in SEA elementary programs has increased to essentially match the MPS figure.

The greatest increase in proportion of minority Americans enrolled occurred in those elementary programs which had low minority enrollments in the first year of SEA. The proportions of minority Americans enrolled at Free School elementary, Marcy and Tuttle have increased from 3%, 4%, and 8% respectively in Year 1 of SEA to corresponding figures of 19%, 18%, and 20% in Year 4. The increase at Pratt/Motley has been from 18% to 24%.

Family Demographic Characteristics

AFDC recipients. While no data is available to incidate the income level of families whose children attend SEA schools, one source of demographic information which is related to income is the number of students in attendance at each school whose family is receiving **Aid to Families with Dependent Children** (AFDC). The latest AFDC data available (January, 1974) indicated that two of the SEA elementary programs had proportions of students from AFDC families greater than or equal to the Minneapolis elementary schools average of 28%. These two schools were Southeast Free School (32%) and Pratt/Motley (28%). Tuttle and Marcy had proportions of 16% and 19% respectively.

Parents' Education

Respondents to annual SEA Parent Surveys have been asked to indicate their educational background. Respondents to the 1974-75 Survey indicated educational backgrounds as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Educational Background of SEA Parents

	Marcy		Tuttle		Pratt		Free School[2]		All SEA	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Some high school or less	1	4	9	9	2	4	5	8	3	5
Finished high school	6	1	24	16	10	4	8	11	12	6
Some college or vocational training	20	11	28	25	17	8	20	12	21	13
Two year college graduate	8	6	7	2	11	5	12	5	9	5
Four year college graduate	16	9	10	10	20	11	21	14	17	11
Some graduate work	18	9	6	5	18	12	14	14	14	10
Graduate degree	26	50	4	17	15	45	14	26	15	38
No response	6	10	12	17	8	12	8	12	8	13
Number of Families[3]	171		139		199		66		575	

M = Mother F = Father

[1] All figures in percents.

[2] Includes parents of students K-12.

[3] 60% of the 1,031 families in SEA responded to the Survey.

The preceding data should give the reader some idea of the types of students enrolled in SEA elementary programs. A second area of interest is an assessment of whether or not the programs provided have met the educational needs of its clients.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM SUCCESS

Certainly, one area of concern in any attempt to assess the success of the SEA programs is how well SEA students are achieving the "basic skills". Indeed, one of the three major SEA goals refers to this area – "The project will profide a curriculum which helps children master basic skills..." The next section presents some data relating to how well SEA elementary enrollees are doing in various basic skills areas.

Attainment of Basic Skills

In discussing attainment of basic skills in SEA it is important to note that the basic skills referred to include the cognitive areas of reading, communications and mathematics, as well as effective learning. Furthermore, emphasis is not on each program providing the most effective basic skills curriculum for each child in SEA, but rather on insuring that somewhere within the range of free choice in the SEA project exists a basic skills program closely fitted to the needs of each child.

Standardized Test Results. Since SEA schools participate in the Minneapolis Citywide Testing program, the results of these tests provide one piece of outcome data for assessment of cognitive skills. It should be noted, however, that many people in SEA believe that standardized tests are not appropriate means of assessing the results of an alternative program. For more detailed discussions of this point the reader may wish to examine the following documents: Byers and Rawitsch, *The Relationship of Standardized Testing to Southeast Alternatives*, (SEA: 1973); Hooker and Rawitsch, *SEA Staff Survey 1974: Special Report on Standardized Testing*, (SEA: 1974); Hunter, Holdahl, Ellison, Anderson and Aldrich, *Marcy Position Paper on Standardized Reading Tests*, (SEA: 1974).

Table 2 shows the results of the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests* which were administered in the fall of 1973 and the fall of 1974 to students in grades 4, 5, and 6. (Students in SEA ungraded programs are assigned to grades according to age). The scores given in the table are based upon Minneapolis norms and are the percentile ranks of the average score for the group indicated. Thus, scores above 50 indicate performance above the Minneapolis average while scores below 50 indicate below average performance.

At least three cautions should be kept in mind when examining SEA test scores. First of all, beginning with the 1974-75 school year 6th grade age students from Pratt and Marcy were allowed to enter a new grade 6 program at Marshall-University High School provided they were deemed ready by staff. Not many Marcy pupils elected this option, but large numbers from Pratt did. Very likely the reduced group of sixth grade age students remaining at Pratt were those functioning at lower levels. Secondly, movement in and out of the various SEA programs makes it difficult to attribute test scores to a particular program. While some students who were tested in the fall of 1974 may have been in a particular program for all three of the previous years, amny others may have been there for lesser periods. Finally, the scores at the Free School are based on very small numbers of students and may be, therefore, relatively unstable.

Scores from the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills: Modern Mathematics Supplement* are also available for all except the Free School. This test was administered in fall of 1972 and fall of 1974 to students in grades 4 and 6. The results are shown in Table 3. Again, the scores reported are percentile ranks of the group averages and are based upon Minneapolis norms.

Criterion-referenced mathematics and reading tests have been conducted by Level 11 external evaluation for several years and provide an additional measure of the achievement of SEA students.

Parent Opinions

Since one of the major problems in using test scores to look at achievement is that they may be affected by a number of "input" factors and since different SEA programs are designed to provide emphasis on different "mixes" of cognitive and affective skills, it seems that gathering parent and student opinions about the adequacy of student learning in the programs is another assessment approach particularly suited to SEA.

TABLE 2

Average Mathematics Test Scores

	Marcy		Pratt/ Motley		Tuttle	
	1972	1974	1972	1974	1972	1974
Grade 4	66	43	61	61	48	75
Grade 6	55	42	55	26	32	42

TABLE 3

Average Reading Test Scores

	Marcy		Pratt/Motley[1]		Tuttle		Southeast Free School	
	1973	1974	1973	1974	1973	1974	1973[2]	1974
Vocabulary								
Grade 4	58	57	66	57	66	62		66
Grade 5	76	51	68	66	46	44		34
Grade 6	72	44	54	55	46	51		46
Comprehension								
Grade 4	56	61	66	68	53	61		52
Grade 5	76	63	68	57	44	42		38
Grade 6	63	61	56	40	53	58		38

[1]Was Pratt/Motley in 1973 – Pratt in 1974.

[2]Did not participate until fall, 1974, the Minneapolis average while scores below 50 indicate below average performance.

The results of a parent survey conducted after the first year of the SEA project indicated that 26% of the SEA elementary parents felt their children had learned as much in the basic cognitive skills areas that year as they had in the previous year and 44% felt their children had actually learned more.

Parents were also asked to compare learning that year with learning the previous year in some non-cognitive areas. Eighty-one percent of the elementary respondents said they felt their children had learned **as much or more** about "developing values" with 40% saying their children had learned more. Eighty-five percent of the respondents felt their children had learned **as much or more** about "adapting to new situations" with 63% saying their child had actually learned **more.**

More recently the 1974-75 parent survey asked the question: "How much does each child seem to be learning?" Ninety-six percent of the Tuttle respondents chose "learning lots" or "learning some". Eighty-one percent of the Pratt and Marcy respondents answered similarly as did 59% of the Free School Respondents. Four percent of the Tuttle respondents chose "a little" as did 9% at both Pratt and Marcy and 17% at Free School. Only at the Free School did any respondents select "nothing" (10%).

General Measures of Success

Parent surveys have been conducted during each of the four years of the project. Among other things, these surveys have asked parents to rate various aspects of the SEA program.

One question which has been asked each year and which provides a global assessment of the success of SEA is: "The quality of education provided in SEA schools is high."

In SEA's first year about half of the respondents selected "neutral" or "don't know" in answer to the question. Apparently due to greater awareness of the project, the proportion of "neutral" and "don't know" responses dropped to about one-fourth for the next two years and finally to 18% in Year 4. The ratio of agreement to disagreement has shown a generally increasing trend going from about 2.75 to 1 in Year 1, to 3.7 to 1 in Year 2, to 6.4 to 1 in Year 3, and finally, to 5.8 to 1 in Year 4.

Over the four years, responses to this question have differed somewhat according to school. The results for 1974-75 (Year 4) showed that the ratio of agreement to disagreement ranged from about 25 to 1 at Marcy to about 3.3 to 1 at MUHS. The ratio for the other three schools were 7.7 to 1 at Tuttle, 6.1 to 1 at Pratt and 5.1 to 1 at Southeast Free School.

Another global assessment about the quality of education in SEA elementary programs is provided by 1974-75 parent responses to the question: "My children are getting an excellent education at (school name)." Tuttle respondents chose agreement over disagreement by a ratio of 38.5 to 1 while the ratios at Marcy and Pratt were 7.3 to 1 and 5.9 to 1 respectively. At the Southeast Free School, disagreement outweighed agreement by a ratio of 1.45 to 1.

Surveys over the last three years of the project have also asked parents how happy their children are at their school. The results for Marcy, Pratt and Tuttle have been very similar across schools and have remained uniformly high for all three years. These results have shown from 80 to 90% "happy" or "very happy", a small percentage "indifferent" and an even smaller percentage "unhappy" or "very unhappy".

The 1974-75 Southeast Free School results are slightly lower than those of the other three schools with 68% choosing some degree of happiness, 12% "indifferent" and 15% "unhappy" or "very unhappy". These results also seem to be somewhat less positive than the Free School results of the two previous years.

Other questions on the latest (1974-75) parent survey asked parents to rate more specific aspects of the school programs. Fifty-seven percent of the Marcy respondents expressed some degree of satisfaction with the Marcy reading program while only 6% expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. The corresponding percentages for the mathematics program were 45% and 20% while for discipline they were 67% and 10%. Eighty-three percent of the Marcy respondents also expressed some degree of satisfaction with "efforts to promote emotional development" while only 4% chose either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".

At Tuttle, 92% of the respondents were satisfied to some extent with the reading program while only 1% expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. The corresponding percentages for the mathematics program were 83% and 3% while for discipline they were 63% and 9%.

Seventy-nine percent of the Pratt respondents expressed some degree of satisfaction with the Pratt reading program while 11% were dissatisfied to some extent. The corresponding percentages for the mathematics program were 50% and 22%, for discipline they were 58% and 13% and for "efforts to promote emotional development" they were 62% and 6%.

Free School respondents were almost evenly split in their rating of the school's language arts program with 41% expressing some degree of satisfaction and 34% some degree of dissatisfaction. The results for the mathematics program were more positive with percentages of 52 and 18 respectively. In the case of discipline 38% of the respondents selected some degree of disagreement in response to the statement: "The way discipline is handled at the Free School presents a serious problem." Twenty-eight percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The preceeding information should assist the reader in formulating an opinion as to whether or not SEA has been successful in meeting the educational needs of its clients. One final area to be discussed in the success of SEA is providing decentralized governance and decision making.

SUCCESS IN DECENTRALIZING GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

The third of the three major SEA goals calls for some decentralization of governance and decision making. Again, some survey information is available which indicates, at least partially, how well SEA has achieved this goal.

Results of both the 1973-74 and 1974-75 parent surveys indicated that about one-fourth of the respondents felt that parents should have more power in SEA decision making than they had at that time. These results were essentially consistant across all schools. Additionally, the 1974-75 staff survey asked staff about the amount of input parents have in planning programs, making budget decisions and making personnel decisions. In all three areas one-fifth to one-third of the respondents felt parents had "too little" input.

The 1974-75 parent and staff surveys also queried respondents about the role students play in decision making. The responses from parents differed somewhat by school with 39% at the Free School saying students should have more power than they do presently while only 14% of the Tuttle respondents felt that way. The percentages at Pratt, MUHS and Marcy were 19%, 22%, and 26% respectively. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents to the 1974-75 staff survey indicated that they felt students had "too little" input into program planning or budget decisions while 28% felt similarly about student input to personnel decisions. Similar questions on the 1974-75 staff survey about staff's decision making role in the program planning, budget and personnel areas indicated that about one-third felt that staff had "too little" input in all three areas.

SUMMARY

The primary purpose of the SEA Internal Evaluation Team is to provide feedback to project decision makers to enable them to make informed decisions about possible program modifications. In carrying out this charge, the Team provides a variety of information. Some of this information is of an exploratory or "needs assessment" nature, some is aimed at assisting in the making of "suc-

cess" judgements and some is aimed at providing for other needs.

Particularly hard to summarize is process data and data which relates to unique aspects of specific SEA programs. This article, then has concentrated on product data which pertains primarily to the three major SEA projectwide goals.

No attempt has been made to address the many unique goals of the various SEA programs. Hopefully, the information provided will be useful to those readers who wish to make a judgment as to whether or not the SEA project has been successful in meeting its major goals.

Readers who are interested in exploring SEA's success in more depth – particularly those who wish more exposure to process information and/or who wish further information about unique aspects of specific programs – may wish to consult one or more of the following Internal Evaluation Team documents.

YEAR THREE OF SEA: 1973-74

1974 Staff Survey:
- Part I: General Report
- Part II: Report on Items Pertaining to SEA Management Team
- Part III: Report on Items Pertaining to City-Wide Testing Program
- Part IV: Report on Items Pertaining to Internal Evaluation Team

1974 Parent Opinion Survey
Study of Participation in Governance by Representative Groups in SEA
SEA Elementary Student Interviews: A Study in Choice-making
Marshall-University High School Guide Group Evaluation
Marshall-University High School Staff Evaluation of Administrative Performance
Study of Choice-making in the Marshall-University High School Transitional Program
Marshall-University High School QUESTA Report:
- Part I: Interpersonal Relations
- Part II: Teachers
- Part III: Curriculum
- Part IV: Job Preparation
- Part V: Effects of School Experience
- Part VI: Student Leadership Experience
- Part VII: Race Relations

Southeast Free School End-of-Third Year Evaluation Report
Marcy Open School Goal Evaluation: 1973-74
Marcy Open School Community Day Report
Marcy Open School Student Interview Report
Student Opinion of Pratt/Motley IMS Math Program
Pratt/Motley Math Achievement Skills Test (MAST) Report
Teacher Center Staff Logging Report
Evaluation of the Tuesday Release Time and Human Relations Programs in SEA
The Relationship of Standardized Testing to Southeast Alternatives

YEAR FOUR OF SEA: 1974-75

Internal Evaluation Plan for Year Four of SEA
Internal Evaluation Speaks to the Goals of Southeast Alternatives
1973-74 SEA Study of Elementary Student Characteristics and Movement
University of Minnesota/Minneapolis Public Schools Teacher Center Effectiveness Study
Study of Southeast Alternatives Transfer Students: Fall, 1974
1975 Southeast Alternatives Staff Survey
1974-75 Southeast Alternatives Parent Opinion Survey
Southeast Alternatives Director Evaluation – Spring, 1975
Evaluation of the Marshall-University High School Early Graduation Program
Supportive Evaluation of Marcy Open School
Marcy Open School Community Day Evaluation: 1974-75
Marcy Open School Goals Evaluation: 1974-75
Southeast Free School End-of-Four Year Report
Evaluation of the Pratt IMS and ABC Programs
Formative Evaluation of Alternative Schools
1974-75 Marcy Open School Multi-Age Study
Marcy Position Paper on Standardized Reading Tests
Documentation: Marshall-University High School Open Middle Program
Eleven-Year-Olds' Choice of Open Programs in SEA
Evaluation of Southeast Alternatives Community Volunteer Program

Postage and handling reimbursement of 30 cents per report is requested for reports which must be sent by U.S. Mail. We ask that if possible reimbursement be made in **stamps**. Reports are available as long as supply lasts.

Send requests to:
Internal Evaluation Team
Southeast Alternatives
1042 18th Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414

The Role of the Experimental Schools Program in Developing and Disseminating Knowledge of Alternative Schools*

by Larry J. Reynolds

"SEA has been successful in implementing alternative schools . . ."

The purpose of this article is to discuss the role of Experimental Schools Program (ESP) in creating alternative schools in Minneapolis (Southeast Alternatives) and the potential effects of Southeast Alternatives (SEA) on educators across the country who are considering adoption of alternative schools. While the intent of ESP, both in general and in Minneapolis in particular, has been discussed in other articles of this work, the attempt here is to focus on what the Experimental Schools Program has accomplished during four years and what is perceived as long-term effects for the future. Specifically, three areas will be addressed: (1) ESP's role in the development of alternative schools, (2) how ESP created visibility for the concept of alternative schools and thereby a need for dissemination of knowledge about alternative schools, and (3) potential constraints of ESP on the survival of the SEA program and on the dissemination of knowledge of alternative schools.

ESP's Role in Development of Alternative Schools

Financial aspects of the Experimental Schools Program have been highly visible to outsiders and have generated a number of misconceptions about the nature of the federal project. A colleague recently asked for an opinion of SEA and received the reply, "It's been a success." His retort was, "Of course, look at all the money they had." While we acknowledge the ample funding of SEA, $6.2 million over a five-year period, the dollar has not been the **only** cause of successful implementation of alternative schools in SEA. Research literature provides numerous examples of failure to implement change under conditions of considerable financial support. The cost of alternative schools has often been questioned. Because of the magnitude of federal support, educators may feel it is unrealistic to consider alternative schools without substantially increased expenditures. An understanding of the nature of the federal project in SEA, however, may distinguish between the cost of SEA and the cost of alternative schools and may also demonstrate that equivalent resources in other settings are not required.

We believe the dollar has been a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of change in SEA. Responsibility of SEA to the National Institute of Education, and the status of SEA as a separate administrative unit within the Minneapolis Public Schools, created a "temporary system" of public schools. This temporary system was characterized not only by the **resources** to make significant changes in the organization, governance and instructional programs of SEA, that is, to implement fully the concept of alternative

*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education and no official endorsement should be inferred.

schools, but also the **autonomy** to do so. As we will discuss, both the autonomy and financial resources of SEA were necessary for the change effort: neither was sufficient by itself.

Autonomy of SEA

Goals and funding of ESP separated the change attempt of SEA from the larger district. While SEA was not independent of the Minneapolis Public Schools and their regulations, policies, and priorities (one of the latter being development of alternative schools), SEA did enjoy the administrative autonomy to implement decisions of sufficient magnitude to significantly alter the nature of public schooling. The autonomy of SEA thereby removed many potential barriers to change stemming from the larger school district. The decision-making flexibility of SEA allowed monies to be allocated in a manner which could support significant change rather than only funding changes totally acceptable to the larger system.

The decisions made in SEA were of greater significance than those typically made in public schools by parents, teachers, professional support staff and building administrators. Typically, central office administrators retain power over decisions about budget allocations, staffing patterns and selections, the nature and extent of inservice training, building alterations, new curriculum materials, and the basic instructional organization of teachers and pupils. These decisions were "decentralized" in the sense that they fell largely within the domain of SEA participants and were established within SEA. In summary, we believe that administrative autonomy was a necessary condition for the successful implementation of change in SEA. It is important to further note that although financial resources facilitated autonomy for these decisions, the decisions themselves were not always directly tied to allocation of financial resources.

Role of the Dollar

The funding level of SEA not only supported the cost of alternative schools per se, but played a major role in facilitating the process of change itself. The intensity and magnitude of the change effort was greater than that typically possible even with special funding. This accelerated the development and implementation of alternative schools. An examination of the type of expenditures in SEA, rather than their absolute amount, provides a basis for distinguishing between what alternatives cost SEA and what alternatives may cost in other settings.

The following categories indicate costs greater than those typically required of public schools (e.g., salaries of teachers and administrators, replacement costs of instructional materials, and funds required for buildings and grounds maintenance). From the perspective of SEA, the critical distinction is that funds were available for significant expenditures in **all** areas. From the perspective of others implementing alternatives, the emphasis given each category may vary from setting to setting and from time to time.

1. **Initial Costs**: These costs are associated with changes in buildings and furniture necessary to support different instructional arrangements of students and teachers. In changing to an open school program, for example, it may be necessary to remove desks, install rugs, increase light, and construct areas for specialized activities as well as purchase new furniture and supporting materials. Changes of this type **facilitate** new instructional arrangements and activities. These costs are essentially one-time costs and may be as conservative or extensive as the budget allows.

2. **Developmental Costs**: The largest development expense is considered to be staff training. SEA has emphasized staff training in its development of alternative schools, particularly during the first half of the project. Staff training **could** be a one-time cost, but turnover may extend this need over time in other settings. Staff stability, then, is a key to the costs involved as is the amount of training and the size of staff. As a rule, the greater the departure of the new programs from the knowledge and skills associated with previous programs, the greater the cost of training.

3. **Supportive Costs**: These costs are associated with an increase in professional staff and required services to meet new organizational and instructional needs in an alternatives system. SEA information dissemination activities have been targeted toward both the local community and visiting professional educators. An evaluation program has been implemented and the related additional staff employed. The community education program has added building coordinators and the number of aides involved in the instructional program has been increased. Each of these additional roles create an increase in staffing and salary expense. It is believed these expenditures have been most important in producing significant changes in SEA. This category of expenditures, however, may have the largest impact on budgets of others considering similar programs.

4. **Supplemental Costs**: This category includes increase in expenditures for equipment and materials similar to those of past programs; i.e., they represent "more of the same." While it may be argued that substantial additions of

materials, particularly where the quantity had been inadequate, may constitute significant change, it is believed that **major** changes in instructional programs typically do not emerge from disbursements of this nature.

5. **Nonmonetary Costs:** It is strategic to consider nonmonetary costs **at the same time** as monetary costs to provide a realistic perspective concerning the role of money in the development of alternative schools. Much of the SEA program is **not** dependent upon additional funding. For instance, new governance structures per se cost little. Community involvement is an attitude and pattern of interaction, neither of which necessarily cost additional money. A sensitivity to the affective aspects of instruction does not require new instructional materials or new buildings. While money provides visible change in a program, the noncost factors of philosophy, attitude, and commitment give new programs their substantive changes.

It is essential to recognize that SEA was building on an earlier commitment to alternative schools which, without federal funds, would have resulted in a limited trial program. The additional monies supported the full implementation of alternative schools; they did not create the supportive context of the change attempt. Further, the noncost factors highlight the importance of the legitimacy of the change effort and the autonomy of SEA within the Minneapolis Public Schools. Other educators, were they to secure equal monies, could not be assured of achieving equally successful change.

Knowledge as a Product of SEA

Community participation, project governance, teacher training, community education, student and teacher groupings, instructional materials, and evaluation strategies have been created, revised and discontinued. They have been functioning, problematic and rewarding. Successes, failures, limitations, and consequences have been experienced in SEA. Other schools no longer need to experience the same time and expense of basic development and the "economy of change for others" **may** be one of the most significant contributions of SEA.

While a knowledge of the functioning and consequences of alternative schools has been developed within SEA, to date this knowledge has not been utilized fully by the larger educational community. As discussed in the next section, visits to SEA by educators from across the country have accented the need for this knowledge, but have not provided it.

Visibility and Increased Need for Knowledge of Alternative Schools

The Experimental Schools Project and Southeast Alternatives, by virtue of the magnitude and intensity of the change effort, have become highly visible to educators across the country. This visibility was enhanced by the commitment of SEA participants to the larger audience of educators interested in alternative schools and by SEA information dissemination activities (this work is but one example). Dissemination, however, has not been the major thrust of SEA. Indeed, SEA visitors have required considerable organizational resources and have created conflicting demands on the operational roles of SEA staff in terms of time and energy. The impact of visitors on school programs across the country is not known, but a knowledge of the general process of diffusion of innovation may lend insight into the probable effects of "visiting."

The role of ESP and SEA in countrywide adoption of alternative schools can be examined by considering the following listing as stages in adoption of new programs and practices (after Everett Rogers, **The Diffusion of Innovations**, 1964): (1) awareness, (2) interest, (3) knowledge, (4) trial and (5) adoption. This model emphasizes knowledge acquisition and utilization; the logic is as follows. After a group becomes **aware** of a new program and expresses an **interest** in it, **knowledge** of the operation and consequence of the program is necessary to effectively implement a new program on a **trial** basis or to **adopt** it with a larger commitment. SEA reflects the current nationwide model of dissemination used by educators, which is characterized by brief visits to innovative, usually federally funded, programs. The major outcome of visiting is to enhance the awareness and interest. Knowledge acquisition, we believe, has been minimal. The dominant pattern for such visits is a general project orientation followed by visits to selected sites. The exposure to the concept of alternative schools is brief and selective. Further, it is possible that such visits do little more than provide examples which validate the preconceived notions visitors have about alternative schools. We feel that specific and concrete **knowledge** about alternative schools and their many facets (community involvement, instructional programs, governance structures) are not gained by visitation. Educators may become interested in alternative schools, and indeed even begin implementation without the knowledge that would assist the process and enhance the probability of success.

Research in other settings points out the problems of implementation when potential adopters do not have the knowledge and skills consistent with new programs and are forced to rely on existing knowledge and skills. New programs are "assimilated to the familiar;" that is, interpreted and implemented in a manner considered to be consistent with previously existing programs. The consequences of assimilation to the familiar are essentially (1) a failure to implement the proposed program in a manner which maximizes its potential improvements, and (2) an inability to behave in a manner entirely consistent with the past. As a result, the new program is neither satisfactory from a change or status quo perspective and an overall loss in organizational and instructional effectiveness may result.

In sum, as the visibility of alternative schools increased via SEA, the awareness and interest in alternatives increased, and the need for knowledge of alternatives also increased. Again, we do not believe that dissemination of knowledge concerning the implementation and consequences of alternatives is consistent with the level of knowledge that has been developed within SEA. As the next section indicates, the conditions which facilitated the development of this knowledge may place constraints on its ultimate dissemination.

Survival of SEA and Dissemination of SEA Knowledge

As stated earlier, SEA has been successful in implementing alternative schools. It has been successful, however, as a temporary system. Those conditions which have characterized SEA over the past four years will soon end. The administrative autonomy, the financial resources, and the decisions about the nature of public schooling were temporary. These conditions were temporary "long enough" to enable the implementation of alternative schools and to provide a setting where knowledge about the structure, functioning and consequences of alternative schools could be developed. The change in status of SEA as a system of schools, however, may place a number of constraints on the dissemination effort. The ultimate knowledge dissemination of alternative schools depends on two factors: (1) the ability of SEA to retain key staff to maintain its operating program and (2) the ability of SEA to attract funding to support strategies of dissemination other than visiting.

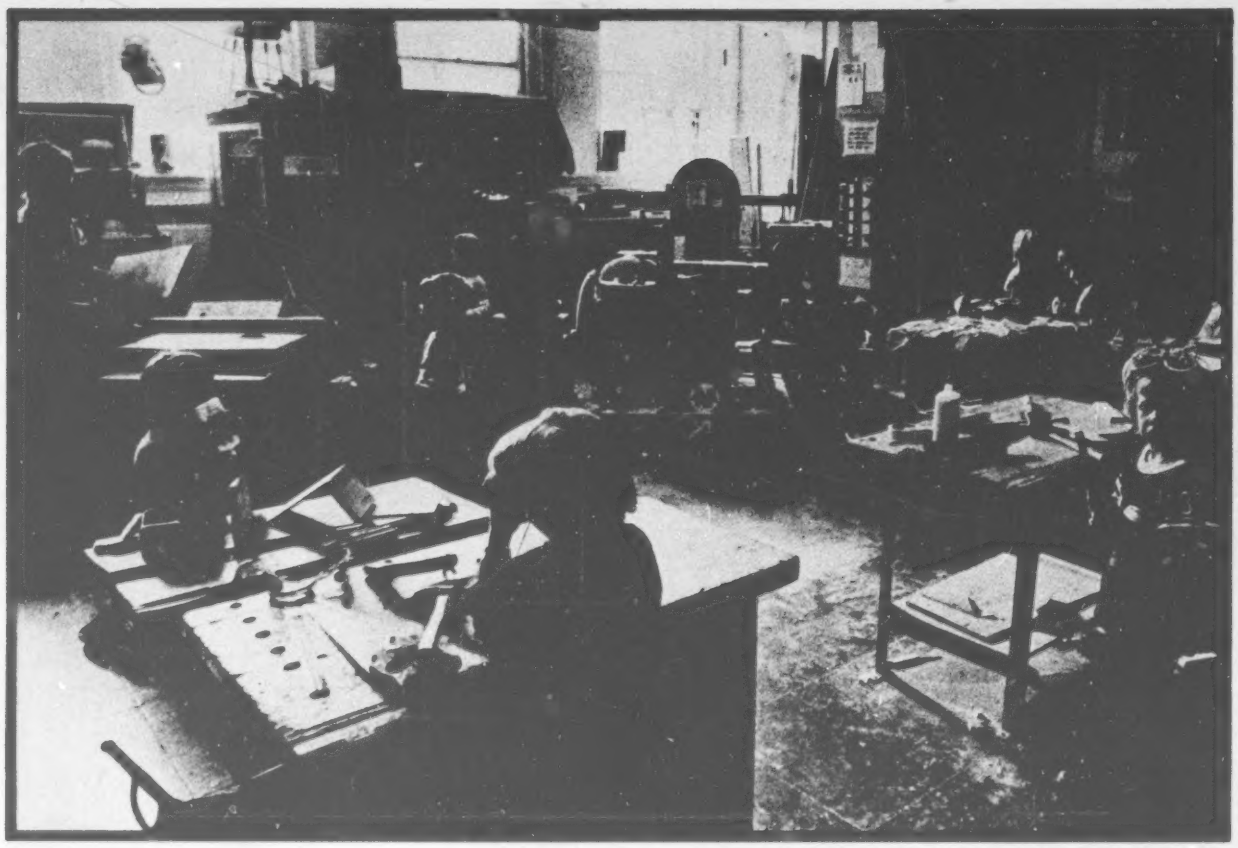
The survival of SEA depends on the effect of changes in conditions that have characterized its status as a temporary system. Changes which may alter the administrative autonomy of SEA

have already occurred. SEA has become part of the West Area, one of three administrative pyramids of the Minneapolis Public Schools. At the same time, several top administrators of the larger district have taken positions elsewhere; SEA itself has a new director for the last year of the project. During this last year of federal funding, then, SEA is subject to influence by the funding and program priorities of a new, and temporary, administrative structure. Decisions about the manner in which SEA will be funded with local monies will be made within this new structure. They will also be made without any responsibility to the NIE for the goals and priorities of the Experimental Schools Program.

While the argument has been made that financial support of the magnitude received by SEA under ESP is not necessary for implementation of alternative schools, the magnitude and intensity of the effort in SEA cannot continue without these funds. Allocation of resources to continue the supportive costs of alternative schools are considered to be most critical for the survival of SEA. The additional SEA staff positions have provided a number of services necessary for the concept of alternative schools; evaluation, information dissemination, community resource coordination, curriculum coordination, and teacher training. If these positions are not retained through the use of other funds, the program components will terminate. It is highly unlikely that these roles and activities could be assumed by administrative and instructional staff under typical staffing patterns.

A third factor which has contributed to the success of SEA, not totally independent of the administrative autonomy and financial resources discussed above, is its "energy." SEA has been characterized by a small core of key staff involved from the beginning and the success of SEA has not been independent of their personalities, commitments and influence. The challenge, visibility and even notoriety of SEA have all served to create an environment supportive of individual and collective efforts because they were rewarded by change consistent with the commitment of the participants. These persons, who have operated in a context unencumbered by administrative and financial constraints, may find it hard to mobilize their energy in face of these new constraints which may resemble those typically found in public schools. Indeed, the challenge of SEA during the final year may be to retain what has been accomplished in the past, rather than to build for the future. As a consequence, the participants who thrive in an atypical, temporary system may leave SEA and seek new temporary systems where their interests, concerns and skills can be maximized.

The loss of energy and key personnel may only intensify the effect of reduction in autonomy and funding. Remaining staff may respond to the new environmental context with reduced personal effort and in a manner which signals a return to more "traditional" models of instructional programs, staffing patterns, community involvement, and governance structure. As a result, the model needed for dissemination may no longer exist.



An extensive, formal plan for national dissemination of information about alternative schools has not been a part of the Experimental Schools Program. The role of SEA has been defined, at least in retrospect, as developing alternative schools not disseminating information about them.

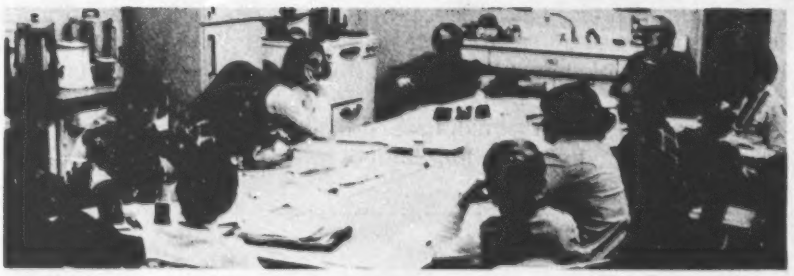
Models exist which could have provided the basis for this dissemination function. For example, training institutes patterned after the National Science Foundation programs would have allowed SEA staff to interact with educators seeking knowledge about alternative schools. A program of this type could have provided a temporary system with a further purpose – one which could have retained the energy and key staff of SEA and, in addition, its model of alternative schools.

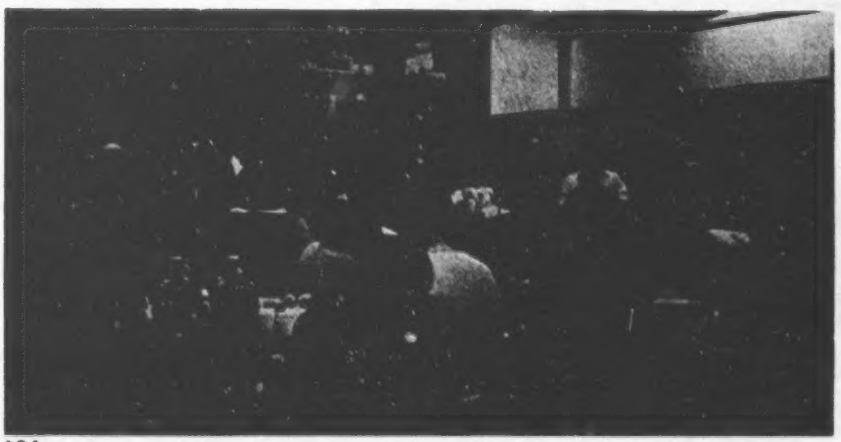
LARRY J. REYNOLDS

Dr. Reynolds, a member of Educational Services Group, Inc. (ESG), is Director of the Minneapolis Evaluation Team, responsible to the National Institute of Education for independent, external (Level II) evaluation of Southeast Alternatives. This article is a partial synthesis by the author of the concepts and relationships derived from the work of the research staff of the Minneapolis Evaluation Team, who have backgrounds in anthropology, educational administration, psychology and sociology. Dr. Reynolds received his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Oregon.

Southeast Council

1971 - 1976





Southeast Alternatives - One Participant's Perspective

By Jane Starr

"It is a tribute to the leadership of Jim Kent, the project director, that he was able to orient people and keep the project moving . . ."

The energies and influences which must conjoin to cause a project as comprehensive and diverse as Southeast Alternatives to be instigated and then implemented are so numerous and, in some cases, so amorphous that to try to develop judgments about how and why things happened as they did is nearly impossible. This paper presents one perception of what seemed to be of significance to the project's functioning and what may be its impact in the future.

Seeds of Change

People in Southeast Minneapolis have been working for their schools for a long time. In 1962, a Citizens League study recommended that either more students should be brought into Marshall High School or the students there should be dispersed to other larger schools. In an effort to save the school, representatives of the Southeast Minneapolis Planning and Coordinating Committee (SEMPACC – an umbrella organization set up to deal with planning issues) working with the Minneapolis Public Schools administration, University of Minnesota administration, College of Education, the City Planning Commission and a School Facilities Survey Team from Michigan State University reached the conclusion that the best solution to the Marshall High School declining attendance problem was a merger with University High School into an outstanding public secondary school for the community. There followed in 1964 the policy that both schools would operate independently but with as much cooperation as could be worked out. After a few years of student and staff exchanges, the schools were finally merged in the fall of 1968. Parents served on many of the planning committees organized prior to the merger to set direction for the new school.

The merger of the two high schools in the area was accomplished by contract between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota and provided a governance procedure for the new school which included a ten member policy board. Two of the ten persons were not be be associated with either parent institution. This was a unique innovation in the Minneapolis Public Schools – a policy board for a public high school with non-professional (i.e. parent) representation.

At about this time, another facility study was being done for the Minneapolis Public Schools by consultants to the system. The schools committee of SEMPACC was formed to try to give some

coordinated community input into this study. The individual community organizations and the overall SEMPACC committee made many recommendations to the study team including such things as: creative planning to use existing facilities better, utilization of resources from the University, establishment of a pyramid system of the four elementary schools and Marshall University High School, more coordination between park, school and other agencies, coordination of all programs in the Southeast schools, and increased use and sharing of resource persons. The community suggestions were made in January, 1969, but, to the distress of the citizens, were virtually ignored in the final consultants' report.

The PTAs of Pratt and Motley Schools had merged in the 1960s. Pratt had become a pilot school in "ungrading" the reading program. Before going into this project, the principal had discussed the proposed program at meetings for parents. There were even antecedents for the after school extended day program at Pratt School in 1965 and 1966 when the PTA sponsored Project'65 and Project'66. Children signed up for various activities (chess, sewing, cooking, dance, etc.) which were taught in the volunteer leaders' homes and in the school after regular school hours. A fair at which all the accomplishments were demonstrated concluded the six weeks of classes.

From the above, it is apparent that the foundations for SEA were being built long before the project actually started. There were other forerunners, also, such as the efforts by some parents in the Tuttle area for an open classroom, and the beginning of a small private free school in Southeast.

Critical Factors

When the U.S. Office of Education moved to fund some experiments in comprehensive change, it appears as if a fortuitous combination of factors existed in Minneapolis. These would have to include a group of creative, "willing-to-take-risks" people in leadership positions in the Minneapolis Public Schools at the time – John B. Davis, Jr., superintendent; James K. Kent, director at Marshall University High School; Richard Allen, David Preus and Stuart Rider on the Board of Education. (It is interesting to note that David Preus had been president of SEMPACC at the time of the MSU report recommending the consolidation of Marshall and University High Schools.)

A sizable group of Southeast people who had worked through community and school organizations to try to maintain Southeast as a viable residential community with superior schools seemed to be just waiting for an opportunity such as the proposed SEA project. Several knowledgeable, concerned people in each school community – Judy Farmer and Diane Lassman at Marcy, Iris Kangas at MUHS, Evelyn Czaia at Tuttle, Sally French at the Free School, and Suzy Gammell at Pratt-Motley – were available to fill the roles of community liaison persons. In addition to bringing an intuitive understanding of the community in each school to their jobs, these women were able to develop an expertise in providing a link between parents and school and project in a unique way. Each was able to contribute to her individual school and the total project in ways consistant with the educational philosophy of the component, and to assist greatly in the extremely crucial processes of information sharing. They were also, interestingly enough, mothers of children in the schools in which they worked.

Decision-Making – Who and How

Formal structures for involving the community in educational decision-making beyond the parent choice of school level underwent a continual change process, developing in varying directions and rates. The development of the Southeast Council must be attributed to the project director. However, the willingness of the individual representatives to assume leadership roles also played a vital role. Dr. Ben Rank, first chairperson, was serving on the council as the PTA representative from Tuttle School, but he is a professional educator in another school district. He brought a notable balanced and judicial view to his demanding job. Another person with astuteness and ability to clarify issues for the group was James Seeden, MUHS senior high faculty representative. His care and concern further benefited the SEA Teacher Center and then the Minneapolis Public Schools/University of Minnesota Teacher Center. The presence on the council of persons with the whole range of educational philosophy from the free and liberal to the structured and conservative provided some interesting times for the participants. A spirit of mutual support developed early-on. The group seemed anxious to try to maintain the integrity of each option.

The Southeast Council was confronted with the problem of dealing with major issues very shortly after being formed. Its major activity during the

first year of its existence was in sponsoring the community meetings on the 1973-76 planning effort for the final 36 months funding cycle for the project. Someone probably has this herculean effort documented somewhere, but in retrospect, it is remembered by this writer as a blur of meetings, drafts, directions, time-lines, re-drafts and redirections.

Governance Procedures

A principal area of concern to the Council was the section on governance procedures for each component and the Council itself. The lack of parent and staff involvement in the MUHS decision-making process was of significant concern. Changing circumstances at both the University and the Minneapolis Public Schools had led the Policy Board of MUHS to reconsider its role. At the same time, the staff development component of the SEA project was moving in the direction of establishing a Teacher Center. For the first year of its existence (1972-73), the Teacher Center was established only within the project. When it evolved and expanded into a cooperative venture with the University, the University commitment to MUHS became even more tenuous. The development of these new public school-university relationships contributed to the creation of even more of a vacuum in the governance structure at MUHS. The principal, with urging from the SEA project director and the Council, working with people from the Policy Board, PTA and faculty, finally devised a principal's advisory council. While this group was included in the final 73-76 plan for SEA, it has never become a viable component of the governance of the school. Reasons for this are discussed later.

An assessment of the impact of the various components. governance structures, either short term or long term, upon the schools individually, or on the project and on the entire district, is extremely difficult. This is compounded by the continually changing nature of the issues with which the governance groups concern themselves and by the changing personalities of the people involved. To an outside observer, the Free School Governing Board and Marcy Council appear to have been most concerned with "process," sometimes to the point where nothing substantive got accomplished until the deadlines for action were so near (or even passed) that decisions were finally made regardless of the process. This is not to say that the decisions were not affected by the process utilized, as they undoubtedly were, and many participants learned a great deal from being involved in the process – something which many consider to be a valid part of public education. Those situations which, at the time, were most abrasive and painful, usually involving a conflict between the advisory group and the administrator over personnel matters, were probably most conducive to growth of the community participants in the long run.

The Pratt Advisory Council is a good example of the changing nature of a governance structure. It was started originally as the Pratt-Motley Coordinating Committee for the purpose of improving the articulation between the two schools when the continuous progress component was split into primary and intermediate units in separate buildings. The PTA was the major parent participation unit. A change in administrators followed by a consolidation of the program into one building contributed to a change in the coordinating committee into an advisory council. Most recently, basic differences in ideas about what is legitimate parent involvement vis-a-vis school program, in ideas about what degree of autonomy the parent group should have, and in educational philosophy in general have surfaced between the PTA leadership and the principal. This led to factionalism in the school with staff, principal, advisory council and PTA board all relunctantly engaged in a power struggle. A long term plan to merge the functions of PTA and advisory council gives every indication of solving the differences.

Another interesting experiment in governance is being carried on by the Minneapolis Public Schools/University of Minnesota Teacher Center. It will be only briefly mentioned here because the topic is covered at length in another section. The Southeast Council recommended persons to serve as the Board of the Center. Four members were appointed by each institution. For the community representative, the experience of working with teachers and professors assessing needs in both pre-service and in-service staff development across a broad range of the educational enterprise has been extremely valuable training.

Management Team

A further dimension of governance which has developed in the project has been the Management Team. The concept was included in the 73-76 plan. The team is composed of the principals and assistant principals of the schools, the Community Education coordinator and the Teacher Center director, the SEA director, the Student Support Services coordinator and the Evaluation manager. It was organized to share decision-making with the director and to decentralize administration further. The roles of the Southeast Council and the

Management Team and their relationship to each other and to the director have never been clearly defined – indeed, they probably cannot be, unless the two groups merge. As one of the first observers from the Council to sit in on Management Team meetings, it was my feeling, at least in the initial stages, that principals were not generally able to operate as a team. Their resistance to allowing Council observers illustrated their apprehension and insecurity in this new situation. However, through the process of working together, team members did become more comfortable and able to deal with issues with greater objectivity as the project developed – and with less of the proprietary attitudes of protecting and preserving each individual adminstrator's "turf."

If the Board of Education policy in Minneapolis is to be further movement toward administrative decentralization, it is apparent that the traditional role of the building principal will have to change. With the problems of declining enrollment and constricted financial resources, this will be a very difficult process. As parents and faculties develop sophistication in demanding "part of the action," as they show every evidence of doing, the Board will be faced with continuing pressure for these groups to be involved in the areas of budget allocation, curriculum and personnel, which, by tradition, have been principals' decisions.

With the establishment of alternatives for the entire city, K-12, it is hoped that at least by recognizing some of the problems, as well as the challenges, presented by the involvement of parents and faculties in what has formerly been administrative prerogatives, the Board of Education can develop policies which will facilitate the process.

> ". . . no other major decision had this much community involvement . . ."

Immediately after completing its efforts with regard to the development, review and approval of the 73-76 plan, the Southeast Council was faced with another major issue – reorganization of facilities within Southeast and the proposed attachment to one of the other areas of the city as directed by the city-wide administrative decentralization plan adopted in the summer of 1973. As the Pratt-Motley PTA representative on the Council, and a member of the writing team, I was closely involved in this effort. The final recommendations resulted in the shift of the Free School into the Pratt building, the expansion of the MUHS transitional program to include children, whose parents choose to send them in their 6th year to MUHS, and the request to delay for one year joining one of the three other areas of the city.

No other major facility and school organization decision had probably ever had this much community involvement in it – although there are persons who still maintain that the decision had been made by higher administration and was manipulated into acceptance. Professor Richard Purple, who was chairperson of the Council at the time and also SEMPACC president, in a letter to the editor of the Southeast Alternatives paper of April, 1974, wrote: *"Were the recent exhausting rounds of meetings on the SEA administrative attendance area and school reorganization plans really cases of foregone conclusion? Some think so, I think not... The present series of meetings was not perfect and did not result in decisions that pleased everyone. But they were fair, they gave all the SEA components an honest shot at influencing the decision-making process, and they did result in education of community and administration alike."*

Problems

Two major problems seem to stand out in an overall subjective assessment of the project. The first one, which constantly faced the entire project, was staff turnover. Every component school had at least one change in administrative leadership, and there was a fairly constant turnover or change in role among the teachers who were most active in the project (with a few exceptions). There seemed to be somewhat less turnover among K-12 staff and support services, but here, too, there was significant change, especially in the evaluation section. Changes in personnel extended up through the higher levels of administration in the University and in the public schools as well as at the director level in Washington. It is a tribute to the leadership of Jim Kent, the project director, that he was able to orient and re-orient people both within and without the project and keep it moving.

The second major problem was the lesser impact of the project on MUHS than at the elementary levels. Reasons for this are many and complex and have been briefly discussed earlier. Included among them must be: 1) the lack of direction by the Policy Board at the time the project began, 2) lack of understanding of the project on the part of most of the teaching staff, parents and students, 3) staff turnover, 4) lack of strong administrative leadership supportive of SEA goals

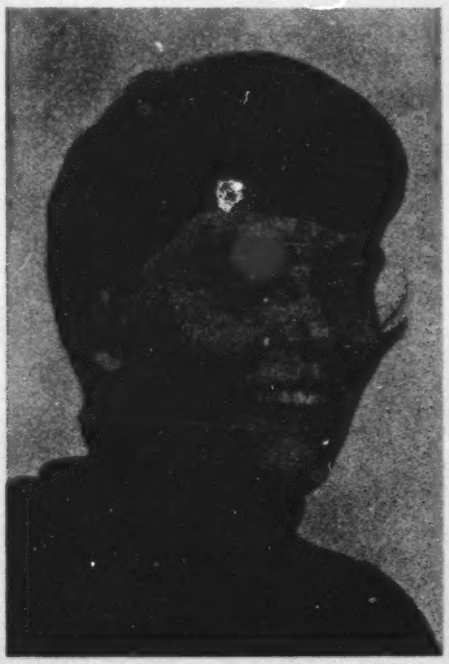
as well as program goals for the school, both at the school level and at the upper levels of public school and university administration. It must be noted that these factors obviously do not apply "across the board" as there were teachers, and others (especially at the tranisitonal level) who worked creatively and diligently for the project. It almost seemed as if the whole secondary system of credit requirements and division of staff, content, and even the school day, into subject areas militated against the development of promising practices. As a parent with two children who benefited directly from the Off Campus Learning Experience and independent study options, I find it distressing to see these options continually narrowed.

Conclusion

Implications of the issues discussed above for Board of Education policy could be far-reaching. One is that teachers and administrators must actively involve themselves voluntarily in the change process. There are many who are not able to or do not want to contribute to the process and directives to the contrary will not suffice. Secondly, teachers and administrators need to gain experience in long term program planning and then be given the resources to follow through on the plans. It will not be sufficient to "lay-on" mandates for planning and program improvements over everything else teachers are expected to do in day-to-day classroom teaching. Either released time for students, or restructuring the teaching day to allow teachers, students, parents, and administrators time to plan together will be necessary. Those parents and teachers who think that time spent in class and learning are synonymous will be resistive of these kinds of changes.

Third, care must be taken to maintain a balance between starting at the bottom to develop an indigenous set of alternatives for each area, and the simple replication of the Southeast model. It takes a great deal of time and energy to reinvent the wheel continuously, yet people in education seem to have a proclivity for doing just that. At the same time, things which apparently work well for one set of people in one set of circumstances often will not operate that way in a changed milieu. The information sharing project held in the fall of 1974 in which literally hundreds of parents and teachers from other areas of the city visited the Southeast Alternatives was a start in giving people first hand information about SEA.

The Southeast Alternatives has had immeasurable impact on the Minneapolis school system. The ideas, the enthusiasm, even the vocabulary, have been pervasive. It has created a climate for rising expectations for parents who are concerned about their children's education and who want to have a choice in kind and quality of experiences for their children. It has also demonstrated to parents, teachers, and administrators that a system in which all are significantly involved cooperatively in making decisions can work.



With four children in the Southeast schools, and as an activist in community organizations and in city-wide education support organizations for many years, Jane Starr attended some of the earliest meetings held to work on the Southeast Alternatives proposal in 1971. She served as the Pratt-Motley PTA representative on the Southeast Council from its inception, was the community representative on the MPS/UM Teacher Center Board, and was appointed to the Board of Education in April 1974.

A School Board Member Looks at Education

By Richard Allen

"The conventional organization of . . . schools seems to me to be designed to promote conflict."

In his book *God, Graves and Scholars* C. W. Ceram includes a picture of an object which he describes as a dodecahedron with pentagonal ends, with various shapes of round openings on the ends. No one knows what it is, with some suggesting that it is a toy, others that it is a die used in a game of chance, others that it is a model used in teaching the measurement of cylindrical bodies, and yet others that it is a candle holder. What is it? It may be all of these, or it may be none.

As we struggle with the questions of goals and priorities, as we try to define what should be the outcome of the process which we call education, I find myself concluding that it may be all of these, or it may be none.

Responding to Community

The Education Task Force of one of the political parties recently urged adoption of a plank calling upon the Minneapolis School Board to provide for re-education of adults displaced by job obsolescence, maintainance of community schools, provision of education alternatives, encouragement of secondary and post-secondary vocational training, and adequate support for students with special needs. A leading critic of the Minneapolis schools called for deletion of all of this plank, and substitution of a statement that we reassert that the education needs of children are the first priority. And the next day a group studying community participation in the Minneapolis schools defined the community as **"all those individuals or groups which have an interest in education in Minneapolis.** 'And we're talking about education as it affects people from the cradle to the grave.' "

I do not disagree with any of these statements, but I do feel that they illustrate the absolute impossibility of being responsive to the community, a charge put to school boards everywhere with increasing frequency. I had hoped, but did not expect, that a definition of community might be developed which would somehow help us define more precisely the community to whom we should be responsive. It is obvious that there will always be another community, or communities, that feels a school board is not responsive on the same issue.

We are faced with the necessity not of being responsive to the community, but of being responsive to as many communities as possible, a task much more complex than any of our critics has acknowledged since our critics usually represent a specific community. The greatest problem we face as School Boards is how to refine the decision making process to make the schools as responsive as possible to the greatest numbers, and it is in this area – decision making – that I anticipate the greatest benefits from the alternatives approach.

Alternatives – The Time Is Now

The conventional organization of schools seems to me to be designed to promote conflict. We have carved out a geographical area, set up a specific program, and have required individuals to adapt themselves to that program. This process undoubtably seemed satisfactory to the majority, since the resultant program probably came closest to meeting their requirements. But even among this majority there was some diversity and conflict. For those not in the majority there were efforts by individual teachers to broaden the style of

teaching to encompass as many interests and needs as possible, but this must have been barely satisfactory at best. That the alternatives approach was an idea whose time had come seems clear when we look at our experiences in proposing expansion to a city-wide basis from the initial effort in Southeast.

Overwhelming opposition was expressed in February, 1972 with comments such as the public schools should offer only one kind of education – that which the majority wants; yet by March, 1973 the situation had changed sufficiently so that the School Board could vote unanimously to expand the program throughout the city.

The change in acceptance was a result of recognition of the most commonly stated virtue of alternatives – the fact that not all children are the same and that we can act to make provision for these differences. As knowledge about the goals and intent became more widely available, questions were answered and suspicion allayed. Parents realized that they could make the decision about the type of program and that they had reasonable expectations that their child would receive better service.

And there was recognition of the fact that the revised approach might be better for teachers too, for they could work with a style that they were most comfortable with. The realization that the decision making process within the school would also be affected came later. The importance of parental and community participation lead to an examination of the role of the total community in guiding the school program and in consultation in such areas as budget and personnel selection. The alternatives process became a means to exercise power in a manner which I am convinced will be constructive.

Unexpected Benefits

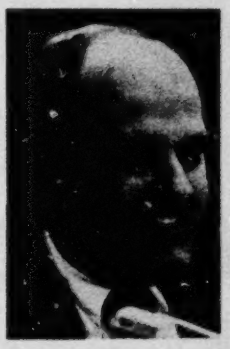
There were unexpected benefits when our school system decided (with some assistance from the Federal Courts) to squarely face the issue of desegregation. When schools were paired for the purpose of desegregation, this was busing and aroused all of the animosity and hatred and opposition that has been the pattern. When schools were paired to offer alternatives, much of the opposition disappeared, or was at least muted by the fact that there was a significant program change underlying the pairing. Parents and students were offered a choice in an area where they had previously been powerless.

As a strong proponent of the requirement that schools be a leader in the desegregation/integration effort, the development of alternative styles of education has provided me with an added educational base upon which to build support for this effort. Our experience to date has been gratifying, with three major examples of the selection of alternative programs resulting in desegregation of the schools.

Of particular note is our most recent effort in the West Area, which is probably the most heterogeneous part of the city when both racial and socio-economic factors are considered. The process of selection of program by parents resulted in desegregation of the schools with the current analysis indicating that every student will be placed in his or her first choice of program. It is at best doubtful if any other decision making process could have produced the degree of acceptance that has resulted from offering alternatives.

A major concern at the inception of Southeast Alternatives was the possibility that an undesirable degree of competitiveness could arise between the several schools in Southeast, and later on a broader base when the program was expanded to other areas. Our school system had been organized in elementary and secondary divisions, with an Associate Superintendent in charge of each. This did not provide a sound basis for planning a continuous K-12 program, and actually produced conflict between the two divisions with competition for funds. We have subsequently reorganized into a K-12 Division of Instruction which has improved our situation. With our earlier experience, however, it was possible to visualize a return to a different form of factional competition. That this has not happened is in large part the result of the careful planning which preceded the development of the program in Southeast, and I am hopeful this will not develop in our expanded program.

There is great satisfaction in observing the successful planning and development of a truly comprehensive change. This is one of what must be relatively few cases where we find the suburbs attempting to emulate the core city for we have mobilized people to capitalize on strengths which may be available only in the city. I am confident that this program will be of major value in maintaining the vitality of the city.



Richard Allen has been a member of the Minneapolis Board of Education since July 1969 and served as its Chairman from July 1970 through June 1972. He is a Director of the Twin City Institute for Talented Youth, and has been active in PTA and the Minneapolis Citizens Committee on Public Education where he served as Legislative Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board. Mr. Allen has three children, one a graduate of West High and the other two currently attending West.

SEA Impact on Minneapolis Public Schools

By John B. Davis, Jr.

"SEA's overriding impact on the school district has been to open minds to change."

I have been asked to comment on various impacts of the Minneapolis Southeast Alternatives (SEA) project on the rest of the school district from the Superintendent's point of view.

What follows must be regarded as an interim report, for the record is not yet complete. Nor is this report to be viewed as all-encompassing; that task must be left to evaluators to whom the charge of a full accounting has been given.

Southeast Alternatives began in 1971 as one of three national Experimental Schools projects funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) with $6.6 million over five years (1971 – 76). SEA is the administrative unit for the public schools of Sutheast Minneapolis, which serve about 2100 students in kindergarten through grade 12.

Although SEA is viewed by many only as a demonstration project in the offering of parent-student choice among alternative schools, its charge also was to discover whether comprehensive change can take place in a large public school district. The plan was to begin the project in a relatively secluded and independent environment. Gradually, new programs and strategies proved effective were to be "exported" to other city schools. Finally, project schools were to return as an integral part of the school system.

When these plans were made, the district had a centralized administrative structure, although some schools in two areas of the city previously had been organized into "pyramids" with expanded local school authority and discretionary power. In August, 1973, administration was further decentralized. Three administrative units, each with an area superintendent, were created. The Southeast schools remained independent.

In fall, 1974, the Superintendent invited SEA parents and teachers to recommend an area affiliation. The West Area was chosen and the Superintendent honored the recommendation. The actual change took place in September, 1975.

Some think this step will endanger unique features of SEA through subordination to other systemwide concerns and educational efforts. "Will the commitment to alternatives, to new patterns of governance, to involvement of parents and students survive?" they ask.

This Superintendent believes the answer is yes. The ideas and energy will survive, and will continue to accelerate the process of change in other schools. There are risks in this process of absorp-

tion. But the test of the project was "comprehensive change affecting an entire city school district". And if it does not work, then the project has, in one sense, failed. Hence, the next few years should be tremendously interesting.

Systemwide Perspective

Assessing SEA impacts can best be done within the context of the Minneapolis school district and its directions in this decade.

Minneapolis has been a school system on the move, heading into new challenges with boldness and determination. School Board members and school district colleagues have been remarkable in their willingness to take on hard problems and turn them into educational opportunities for the city's 55,600 public school students.

The primary challenge has been to simultaneously desegrate/integrate the schools and to improve the quality of education. The School Board affirmed the importance of these goals in 1970 when it adopted a revised set of Human Relations Guidelines which still are viable today. An excerpt reads:

> *"An educational goal of the Minneapolis Public Schools for the next decade is a quality education for all students. A quality school is (1) a school which is well-equipped and well-staffed; (2) a school in which racial composition of the student body approximates the racial composition of the total population in the Minneapolis Public Schools; (3) a school where there is a climate of mutual trust and respect among the student body, faculty and school community; and (4) a school where a significant majority of the students perform at or above acceptable minimum reading and computation performance levels."*

Other challenges surfaced, and are being met with success in varying degrees. Included are alternative education, community education, curriculum revision, racism, sexism, action learning, Indian education, administrative decentralization, and the need to broaden participation in the educational processes and decisions regarding all of these areas by students, parents and citizens, faculty and staff.

The result has been a series of dramatic changes in local public education – in methods of teaching, course content, staff development, administration, decision-making, grade organizations, attendance areas, and human attitudes – with impressive support from teachers, students, parents and citizenry.

What force, what energy propelled the school district in these directions and made these changes possible?

There is no single point of view or goal – in this, or any social system. No one clarion voice of reason. No one source of insight or inspiration or energy. No one cause; no single mindedness of purpose; no exclusivity of intelligence. Rather, there have been great constellations of forces; each in orbit, defined, adhering to a cause and with rare exception avoiding collision. A unity of effort in many parts. People, within a thoughtful context of educational service, have been given opportunities to develop programs and exploit their own abilities and ideas in complementary ways. The consequence has been a dispersion of focus. No one goal to be achieved or to bring failure. Rather, many goals and many directions with differing degrees of progress. Such, I think, characterizes the energies and efforts of the school system in the last decade.

To isolate credit for certain changes is a most difficult assignment! Would Minneapolis parents have embraced the concept and spirit of alternatives as readily had there been no mandate to move their children for desegregation: Conversely, would Minneapolis parents have accepted desegration/integration as peacefully had there been no improved educational program or measure of choice involved? It is the old question of tree or seed, chicken or egg.

But of this I am certain. Desegragation/integration, the strivings for quality education, administrative decentralization and alternatives are unalterably intertwined in Minneapolis schools, and each has nurtured growth and quick acceptance of the others.

Nevertheless, there are areas of school posture and program on which impact of the Southeast Alternatives project can be assessed.

SEA impact on . . . attitudes toward change

From this Superintendent's vantage point, SEA's overriding impact on the school district has been to open minds to change. In so doing, it has allowed an extending of the bounds beyond tradition and provided the base for a comparative analysis, so the district could make some valid judgments from among several educational models.

The 1971 political campaign for election of School Board members, held just two months after the SEA project began, was alive with the issue of alternatives and many negative statements were made. Less than two years later, by unanimous vote, the School Board mandated educational choices for all elementary students by September, 1976. More recently, it recommended extending choices to all secondary students, although no deadline has been prescribed. There will be another election in November, 1975, but this time around alternatives is not an election issue, which signals a

high level of community acceptance.

From SEA, the district has learned that when given sufficient information, parents will select a school other than the one closest to their home in order to get the appropriate alternative program for their children. We also have learned that there is not significant difference in the interest of minority and majority groups when alternative programs are offered following valid participation in development of the programs.

> "Minneapolis parents have embraced the concept of alternatives in unexpected numbers."

Minneapolis parents have embraced the concept of alternatives in unexpected numbers. For example, more than 75 percent of parents of 2,000 randomly selected West Area students surveyed last November said that having alternative educational programs provided was important to them. Among elementary parents, 38 percent were willing to have their child transported to any school in the West Area to get the program of their choice; 43 percent were willing to have their child transported to the next closest school to their child's present school; while only 19 percent said they would choose the nearest available school regardless of program offered.

There are indications of broad acceptance by faculty of alternative programs, although it has been an uncomfortable process for some teachers. This spring a majority of West Area teachers surveyed said they preferred educational programs which provided some variety, flexibility and student responsibility.

SEA impact on . . . desegration plans

One early effect of the SEA project was its influence on the character of the written plan to desegrate the school district. Although the plan varies in different parts of the city, basically elementary desegregation has been accomplished by erasing boundary lines between several elementary schools, offering a different alternative program in each school, and allowing students from the expanded attendance area to choose which school they attend. The assumption was that racial balance could be achieved by giving students a choice between several teaching/learning styles. And that has been the case. An added bonus has been more positive parental attitudes in the face of mandated desegregation than would have been the case had no choices been offered.

SEA impact on . . . redefining alternatives

The Minneapolis schools' "working definition" of alternatives has come largely from the Southeast model. We now use the label "alternative educational program" when the following elements exist: (1) Parents/students are allowed to choose between (2) at least two different, physically distinct, all-day everyday complete educational programs (3) which are planned, implemented and evaluated with considerable involvement of parents and students and teachers.

The SEA labels of "open" and "continuous progress" and "contemporary" alternative programs have been adopted by groupings of alternative schools in other parts of the city, but each school is a little different because an alternative program takes its character from the collective thinking of those it serves. The programs also elude specific definition because they are dynamic; constantly changing to meet the changing needs of the students they serve.

> " . . . an alternative program takes its character from those it serves."

SEA impact on . . . teaching styles and curriculum

Before 1971, Minneapolis elementary schools offered traditional K-6 educational programs, usually with one teacher in charge of the learning of 28 or so children in a self-contained classroom. Although secondary schools provided some flexibility, primarily through work-study programs, most students followed the yearlong sequential course approach to education.

Today elementary students attend schools with a variety of populations – K-2, K-3, 3-6, 4-6; many are taught by teams of teachers, assisted by trained community volunteers, older students and parents; and for many learning takes place in a variety of school and community locations.

The SEA elementary alternatives model – in which boundaries between several elementary schools are eliminated and students within the enlarged attendance area choose the school which they will attend based on its approach to instruction (free, open, continuous progress, contemporary) – has been widely embraced by

other Minneapolis elementary schools. Currently, seven clusters of schools are using modifications of the model, although none has a "free" school and many have modified the "open" model. This year, 7,775 students – one-third of the district's elementary enrollment – are attending alternative schools. The number is expected to double next year.

SEA impact on the district's secondary programs has included adoption of the trimester-nonsequential-nongraded approach to curriculum, increased use of the community as a classroom for academic experiences, expanded opportunities for independent student learning contracts and for early graduation.

There have been spin-offs in many areas of the curriculum which had their origins in SEA schools. For example, citywide performance objectives and criterion-references math tests were built partly on SEA models.

SEA has not given us the full answer for dealing with students in those interesting junior high school years. Currently, programs which offer extension of the contemporary, continuous progress and open models are being watched in a variety of settings.

In addition to serving as a model for change, many involved in SEA programs have pressed actively for change throughout the district. Last fall, SEA staff undertook a large-scale information sharing effort, which involved bringing 360 people in parent-teacher-administrator teams from almost every city school to SEA for a week's orientation to alternatives theory and practice.

"There have been spin-offs in many areas of the curriculum that have had their origins in SEA."

The role of mover has been shared with an Alternatives Advisory Task Force, appointed by the Superintendent in January 1973, which has produced four reports regarding district progress toward the School Board's charge to provide alternatives.

Although others have shared in the task of providing inspiration and information, area superintendents and their staffs have carried the workload of assessing parental and student wishes and translating them into viable programs. Each area has a plan which should result in alternative choices for all elementary students by 1976.

SEA impact on . . . staff development

Another lesson learned from SEA is that teaching staffs can be sufficiently retrained to allow them to function effectively in new educational situations; and that this is true even of faculty who may not have been enthusiastic about assuming new roles.

Much of the credit for this accomplishment goes to the Teacher Center, a joint University of Minnesota/Minneapolis Public Schools service. By providing staff development and internship opportunities for faculty, staff and parents, Center activity has affected attitudes and increased knowledge of alternatives.

Key to this staff development model is that the consumer – teacher, aide, parent, principal – determines to a great extent what training he or she needs to function effectively in a changing educational situation. Teacher Center advocates hope the entire district eventually will adopt this model. However, there are in the system those who see this as a threat to the administrator's traditional role as decider and provider of staff training.

SEA impact on . . . the participatory process

This Superintendent long has believed in the participatory process – the concept that schools can serve people better if they bring more people into the process of formulating plans and programs.

The participatory process as it has evolved in the SEA schools has reshaped the profession and returned a degree of authority to those who perform in teaching roles. Functions of planning, decision-making, responsibility and accountability have been restored to the faculty, and in some cases roles of teachers and principals have been altered significantly. Certainly principals have come much closer to classrooms and teachers and children in the SEA schools. What has evolved is a new collegial model, in the context of sharing with many of those who "own" the children.

To what extent faculties outside SEA have assumed these roles is a question yet resisting firm answer. But there are situations observable in several schools where principals, teachers, parents, and students are collaborating in planning and curriculum revision processes. There is evidence that the role of principal is changing to be increasingly that of facilitator, expediter and participant. Principals transferred from the SEA project to other city schools exhibit these behaviors, as do a few who have not had direct SEA association, although they may have participated in workshops offered by SEA staff. It is my belief that as more people are exposed to this concept of principalship, more may in time

embrace it. Obviously, however, size and complexity of school impact on the feasibility of this type of administrative behavior.

One aspect of community involvement piloted in the SEA project was community participation in selection of principals. At least two other school communities in the city have used this model, in which parent-faculty screening committees interview certified candidates and make recommendations, which in each case have been accepted.

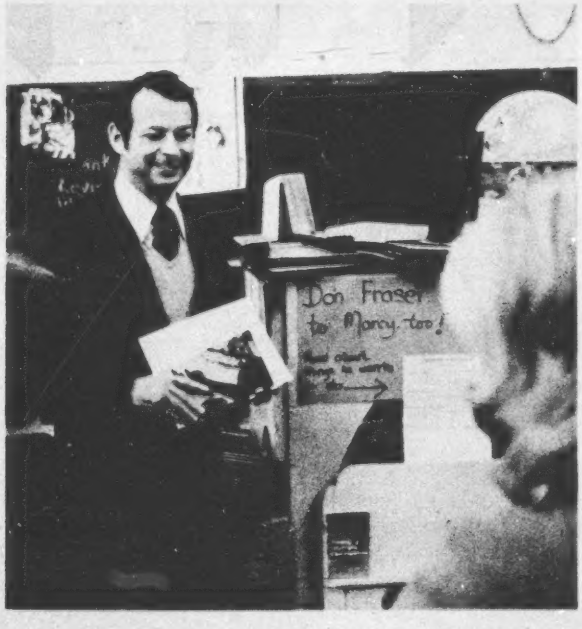
Finally – in what is undoubtedly an incomplete list of SEA impacts – the following thoughts come to mind.

Formative evaluation procedures used in SEA schools have made all of us more aware that evaluation can be useful in ways other than measuring end results. Unfortunately, budget limitations restrict citywide use.

Community attitude toward the Minneapolis Public Schools has been positively influenced both by the existence of the SEA project and by many of the innovations which have been adopted in other city schools. One benefit of offering alternatives has been that it permits some to select the traditional program, and in so doing gives a validity to what we have always done.

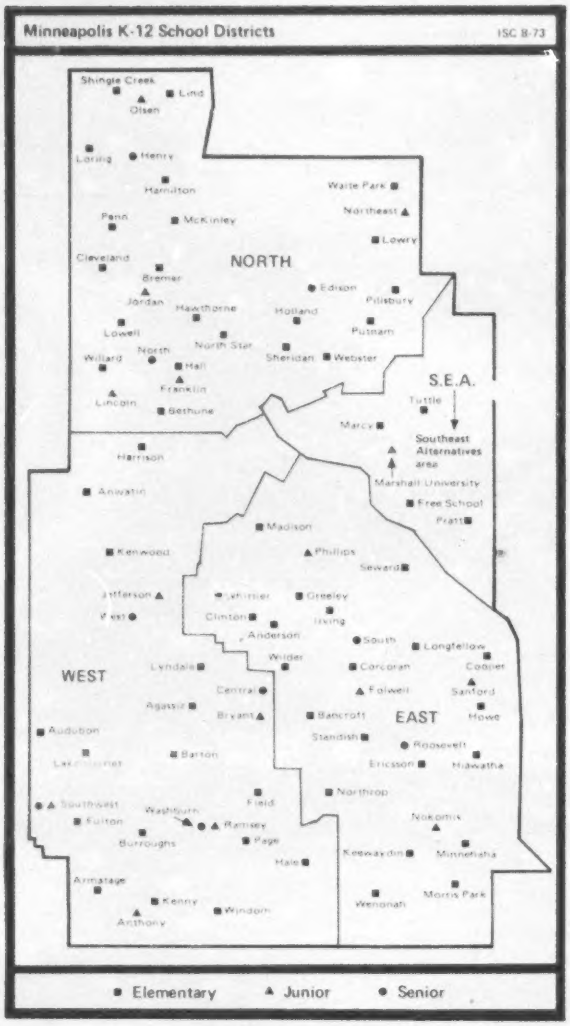
The national attention focused on the school district because of Southeast Alternatives has been impressive. More than 4,000 visitors have been attracted to city schools, which has had the effect of keeping us alert to both the praise and occasional criticism thoughtfully brought by those who have observed our efforts.

John B. Davis, Jr. was superintendent of schools in Minneapolis for 8½ years; years in which the school district gained a national reputation for educational innovation. Dr. Davis left the school system in July 1975 to become President of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.



"A testimony to the success of SEA is the fact that it has served as a model for alternative education programs throughout Minneapolis. During a period in which our educational system must respond to a variety of complex economic, social, and political pressures, SEA serves as an encouraging reminder of the dividends imaginative approaches to education can pay."

Excerpts from Congressman Donald Fraser's remarks before Congress which were read into the Congressional Record, January 16, 1975.



To make an appointment for Wednesday visits to SEA or to receive further information on the project, please write or call:

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